SUNDAY TIMES

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INDIA'S LARGEST ENGLISH NEWSPAPER

O F I N D I A

Golf legend Tiger Woods **released on bail after being arrested for driving under the influence**, following a car crash in Florida. He exited through the passenger door, passed a breathalyser test, but refused a urine test

Four astronauts selected for NASA's Artemis II mission arrive in Florida, entering final phase of preparations for **first crewed journey around the Moon in more than five decades**

Jannik Sinner will be favourite against Jiri Lehecka in the **Miami Open final** while Aryna Sabalenka faces Coco Gauff as both Sinner and Sabalenka chase the Sunshine Double

Teen sensation Kimi Antonelli secures a **second straight pole at Japanese Grand Prix**, beating teammate George Russell, who stays ahead of Oscar Piastri and Charles Leclerc in second row

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Iran hits airbase in Saudi, allies Houthis enter war, target Israel

12 US Soldiers Injured At Base

Exactly a month since US and Israel attacked Iran, a fresh front appeared to have opened in the spiralling West Asia war as the Houthis, an Iranian-backed militant group in Yemen, launched a ballistic missile attack on Israel early Saturday. It was their first in this war, followed by a threat that the attacks would continue "until the aggression ends". Israel said it intercepted the projectile.

An Iranian strike, meanwhile, injured 12 US troops in Saudi Arabia, two of them seriously, in an attack on Prince Sultan airbase on Friday, two people briefed on the matter said. The combined missile and drone attack amounted to one of the most serious breaches of American air defences in the war. At least two KC-135 aerial refuelling planes also suffered significant damage.

Iran also claimed to have struck two US Army "hideouts" in Dubai, Iranian state media Fars News Agency reported. According to the news agency, a military spokesperson claimed US army personnel had moved to these hideouts after Iran's strikes on their bases in the region. AGENCIES

FULL COVERAGE: P 10, 16, 20

▶Strike at Bushehr, P 20

ONLY 3,554 TARGETS LEFT IN IRAN: TRUMP

- In his speech at a biz summit Friday, Trump says war against Iran almost done, only 3,554 targets left, which **will be 'done pretty quickly'**
- In reference to Iran's attack on USS Abraham Lincoln, he said **101 missiles were shot, all were shot down**
- Foreign ministers from Saudi Arabia, Turkiye and Egypt gather for **talks in Islamabad on Sunday and Monday**
- In call with his Turkish counterpart, Iranian fgn minister Abbas Araghchi **accuses US of 'contradictory actions'**
- **PM Modi speaks to Saudi Crown Prince Mohd bin Salman**, slams attacks on regional energy infrastructure

Photo: Tarun Rawat

Visitors are turning up at the Iranian embassy in Delhi with money and messages to show solidarity. One child left a piggy-bank to help with relief shipments

Quick relief needed, says finmin report

India will need to provide immediate relief to the most affected and vulnerable businesses and households, and generate fiscal space to meet strategic and long-term needs, a finance ministry report said Saturday. The impact of the West Asia war will be felt through energy disruption, higher import prices and logistics costs and possible decline in remittances, it said. **P17**

RCB BEGINS CAMPAIGN WITH A BANG

Syed Asif

PTI

Defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) beat Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) by six wickets with 26 balls to spare in the opening match of IPL 2026 at Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru Saturday. Virat Kohli smashed an unbeaten 38-ball 69, while Devdutt Padikkal scored 61 to power the RCB chase, after SRH posted 201 for nine in the stipulated 20 overs. Ishan Kishan top-scored for SRH with a 38-ball 80

The 11 seats dedicated to those who lost their lives during RCB's victory celebrations stood out, enclosed by a picket fence and decorated with flowers against a white backdrop — a quiet reminder amid the charged atmosphere. Before play began, players and fans observed a minute's silence, with 'forever in our hearts' displayed on the big screens | P 21, 22

Vijaypat, 'The Complete Man', passes away

Ex-Raymond chairman Vijaypat Singhania, 87, who embodied his brand's famous tagline, 'The Complete Man', died in Mumbai Saturday. A Padma Bhushan awardee, he led Raymond for two decades until 2000 and later transferred his 37% stake to son Gautam Singhania. **P17**

Mom dead, dad in jail; 1 daughter raped, other sold

Two men have been booked in UP's Pilibhit for allegedly raping their 17-year-old niece and selling her 16-year-old sister after the girls were left in their care following their mother's murder by their father and his imprisonment for the crime. A hunt is on for the younger girl. **P6**

Mysurean held for threat to HC judge

Delhi Police arrested Mysuru resident Louis R Srinivas for allegedly sending threat emails to many govt agencies, Delhi HC and one of its judges, **reports Shrinivasa M**. He was flown to Delhi Saturday after cops got a transit remand. They're yet to ascertain his motive.

NGT issues notice for Mussoorie 'inaction'

NGT has issued a notice to Uttarakhand's chief secretary over "continued inaction" on environmental concerns in Mussoorie despite the issue being flagged in the aftermath of 2023 Joshimath crisis. **P5**

India's largest wildlife crossing opens in Raj

India's largest wildlife crossing, comprising bridges and tunnel for animals to prevent roadkills and reconnect animal habitats, has opened along Ranthambore stretch of Delhi-Mumbai expressway. **P17**

IndiGo flight makes emergency landing after engine failure

New Delhi: A 15-year-old Boeing 737, operating IndiGo flight 6E 579 from Visakhapatnam to Delhi with 170 people on board, made an emergency landing at IGIA on Saturday morning after suffering an engine failure. The aircraft has been wet-leased by IndiGo from Corendon Airlines of Turkey.

The plane experienced an uncommanded in-flight shutdown of engine number one due to high vibrations. The pilots declared an emergency at 10.39am and landed safely at 10.54am. An IndiGo spokesperson said, "A technical snag was detected shortly before landing. As a precautionary step and in accordance with SOP, the pilots requested priority landing. All relevant authorities were promptly informed, and the aircraft is undergoing necessary checks and maintenance". TNN

No jail likely for 1st-time violation of pollution norms

In a reprieve for first-time offenders, govt has proposed to do away with a jail term of up to 3 months for violations of road safety and air and noise pollution norms. As part of the 784 provisions, across 79 central laws, which are to be amended

JAN VISHWAS BILL

through the Jan Vishwas Bill, with several related to decriminalisation, govt has proposed that driving a vehicle, violating road safety or air-pollution control norms — which currently attracts up to three months' jail or a fine of Rs 10,000 and six months DL disqualification — will be punishable with a penalty of Rs 10,000 and 3-month DL disqualification. **P6**

₹20cr push to tackle mosquito menace in city before monsoon

Bengaluru: Three city civic corporations have collectively earmarked Rs 20 crore to tackle Bengaluru's persistent mosquito problem ahead of the monsoon, marking the first time such a large sum has been allocated to fight the menace.

Bengaluru West City Corporation has allocated Rs 9 crore, with plans to deploy gangmen and auto-rickshaws in every division for spraying, fogging and power-spraying operations. Bengaluru South City Corporation has set aside Rs 8.5 crore for similar measures, while Bengaluru East City Corporation has earmarked Rs 4.8 crore.

This intensified drive comes after a high disease burden in recent years. The city reported 14,950 dengue cases in 2024 (with three deaths), which fell to 3,428 cases in 2025. Chikungunya cases dropped to 119 in 2025 from 176 in 2024. This decline suggests improved surveillance and control measures are having an effect. TNN

FULL COVERAGE: P 2

B'luru professor who called student 'terrorist' 13 times suspended

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Bengaluru: A video of a PES University faculty member insulting a student from a minority community has gone viral. The university suspended the professor, who later issued a written apology "for not upholding classroom decorum". According to a social media post, the professor called the student "terrorist" 13 times in a fit of rage.

"While the class is on, you come and disturb everyone. *Sharm nahi aati tumko* (aren't you ashamed)? Useless fellow, terrorist. Yes, I'll call you a 'terrorist'," the professor is heard shouting in the viral video clip. There is still no clarity on what triggered the act, and no police complaint has been filed by either the student concerned or the university. Police, though, have registered a suo motu criminal case against the professor.

Muralidhar Deshpande, an adjunct faculty member with the Bengaluru-based private university, was teaching supply chain analytics to the BBA second year class on March 24 when the incident happened.

While some university sources said he was annoyed after a student repeatedly sought permission to leave the classroom, others said he lost his temper over a noisy class.

The student reported the incident to the department chairperson the same day, who visited the classroom and asked the professor what had happened.

POLICE FILE CASE

- Prof. Muralidhar Deshpande **allegedly called a student 'terrorist' 13 times**, as per a social media post
- **Police file a suo motu criminal case** over the March 24 incident
- Chancellor Jawahar Doreswamy says the **disciplinary panel will review evidence** before action is initiated
- Deshpande says the remark **wasn't aimed at any student; admits it was inappropriate**

▶Police notice to prof, P 3

Musk not part of Modi, Trump phone call: MEA

India has denied reports that billionaire Elon Musk participated in the March 24 call between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump, insisting it was a phone call between the two leaders only on West Asia. The White House declined to confirm or deny The New York Times report, calling the conversation productive. Officials said the phone conversation focused on regional tensions, including securing the Strait of Hormuz, with Modi emphasising safe maritime passage for global stability and economic well-being. **P10**

PM backs ethanol blending to curb crude imports

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Noida: PM Modi inaugurated Noida International Airport in Jewar Saturday, and dwelled at length on energy supply turbulence precipitated by the West Asia conflict, underlining ethanol blending as a key strategy to reduce dependence on crude oil imports.

Modi said the country would have had to import an additional 4.5 crore barrels of crude annually — equivalent to 700 crore litres — if not for ethanol blending in petrol.

"Farmers' efforts in this have given a lot of relief to the country at this time of global crisis," he said. Ethanol production, he added, has not only benefited the nation but also farmers, with about Rs 1.5 lakh crore worth of foreign exchange being saved. Jewar is a gateway to the sugarcane belts of western UP.

> The issue is arising from the war. I again call on people to address this issue unitedly, peacefully. This is a global crisis. We have to care about our country and this is our strength
>
> **Narendra Modi** | PRIME MINISTER

▶Protecting people, P 14

Nepal ex-PM Oli arrested over Gen Z stir deaths

Less than 24 hours after Balendra 'Balen' Shah, 35, took oath as Nepal's PM, his govt on Saturday ordered the arrest of ex-PM **KP Sharma Oli**, 74, and ex-home minister Ramesh Lekhak over Sept 2025 crackdown on Gen Z protesters, **reports Vishant Agarwala**. The govt said it was acting on a campaign promise and on "leaked" Gauri Bahadur Karki panel report that recommended a criminal probe into their role in violence after last year's agitation in which 76 people died. **P20**

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North Corpn Puts Pedestrians First | Key Mobility Plans In Limbo In South | Khata Is King In West Budget Strategy

WALKING THE TALK: NORTH looks to fix crumbling footpaths

Team TOI

After walking nearly 100km across localities in north Bengaluru and studying civic infrastructure first-hand in the past 210 days, Bengaluru North City Corporation (BNCC) commissioner Pommala Sunil Kumar Saturday presented a civic budget with an outlay of over Rs 4,300 crore, seeking to improve 1,000km of pavements across seven assembly constituencies.

This is the first time in recent years a bureaucrat is prioritising pedestrians. "Pedestrians are increasingly walking on roads. This has to change, we need to get all the elements right and fix footpaths for pedestrians," said the 44-year-old IAS officer, whose public outreach programmes have drawn appreciation. BNCC, which comprises areas such as Yelahanka, Pulikeshinagar and parts of Rajarajeshwari Nagar, manages 2,545km of ward roads and 334km of arterial and sub-arterial roads.

"Footpaths are the biggest concern for our corporation because the situation is horrible," Sunil Kumar said, pointing to encroachments, electric poles, trees and street vendors. He added that despite allocations in previous budgets, little has changed on the ground.

Referring to his daily morning inspections, undertaken on foot, he said it revealed the extent of the deterioration of both roads and pedestrian infrastructure. "After walking across the corporation, we identified several roads that needed restoration," he said.

Pics: TOI

CRUCIAL MONTHS: Last year's monsoon months proved cumbersome for pedestrians in this part of the city. Will things improve this year after Bengaluru North corporation chief Pommala Sunil Kumar's 100km study shaped a 1,000km footpath upgrade plan?

Allocation Per Ward

At the ward level, each of the 72 wards will receive Rs 2.2 crore, with Rs 75 lakh earmarked for maintenance efforts such as drain desilting (Rs 20 lakh), pothole filling (Rs 10 lakh), traffic-related works (Rs 20 lakh), and footpath repairs (Rs 25 lakh). An additional Rs 1.5 crore per ward will go towards broader development works, including road improvements. Crucially, Rs 25 lakh has been set aside per ward specifically for footpath reconstruction, targeting nearly 1,000km of pedestrian pathways. The corporation has also allocated Rs 50 crore for pedestrian-friendly junctions, skywalks, and related infrastructure.

"Footpaths used to be an afterthought, but now we have a pedestrian-first budget. Footpaths were not even mentioned separately in earlier civic budgets... It's encouraging that the GBA and the chief commissioner have taken serious interest and officials are more aware. Most people don't realise the issue until they actually walk. Better coordination between agencies will be crucial. Earlier, footpaths were simply treated as part of road development

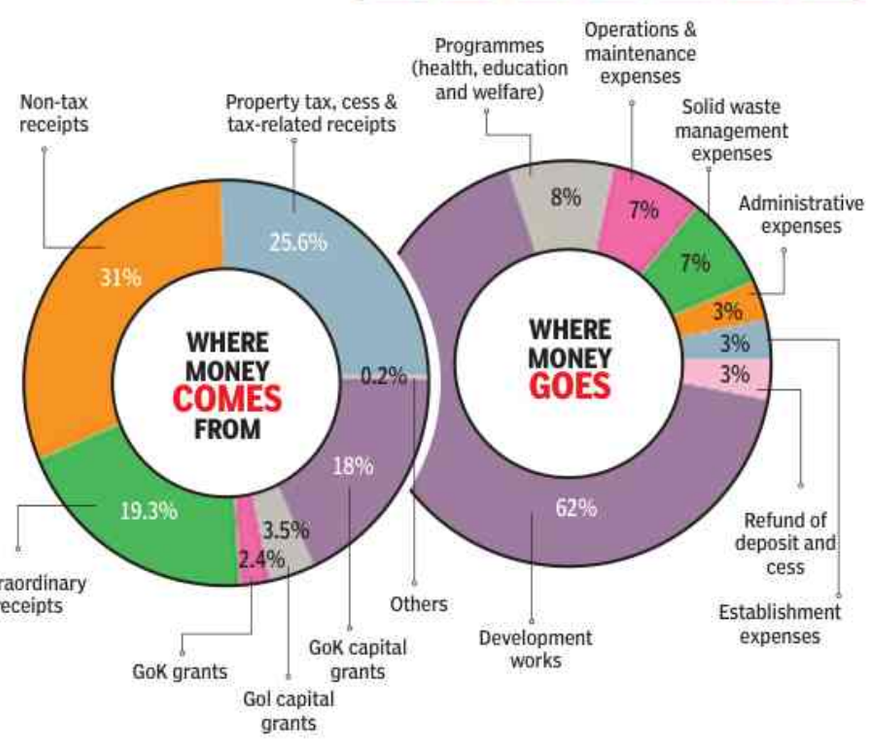
Arun Pai | COORDINATOR OF WALKALURU

"The budget is good and we are looking at development, but what we need is transparency. Bengaluru North is the entrance to Bengaluru and is growing vastly. Infrastructure development, including roads and footpaths, is the key to the city's growth and beautification

Kavya Gowda | RESIDENT OF KEMPAPURA

Lake rejuvenation forms another major component of the 2026-27 budget, with Rs 40 crore allocated for restoring waterbodies. "Many lakes have turned into dry land or even playgrounds. We need to excavate them and restore them with BWSSB's support, even if it means creating man-made lakes," Kumar said, citing instances such as Banaswadi and Srinivasapura where lakes have been degraded significantly. BNCC has 36 lakes, of which 30 have already been developed and are under maintenance. Work is ongoing at Hebbal and Nagawara lakes, while Srinivasapura and Mallasandra Gudde lakes are slated for comprehensive development.

Lion's Share for Development



Marriage Assistance For Civic Workers

For the first time, financial aid of up to Rs 2 lakh will be provided to civic workers to support their daughters' marriage expenses

Focus on Transgender Welfare

Financial assistance of up to Rs 50,000 per beneficiary has been proposed to promote self-employment of members of community

Akka Cafe Initiative

Under the National Livelihood Mission, Rs 27 lakh has been allocated to launch women-run 'Cafe Sanjeevini' (Akka Cafe) serving affordable food

Rodent-Control Measures

A sum of Rs 8.8 crore has been earmarked to carry out rodent-control activities to prevent contamination across the corporation

Keeping Spaces Green

A total of Rs 62 crore has been allocated for park development and maintenance in the limits of north Bengaluru, with Rs 37 crore set aside for maintaining 336 parks and Rs 25 crore earmarked for park development and upgrade

WEST EYES TOP SPOT in GBA's revenue basket

AIMING HIGH: West plans to hit a revenue target of Rs 1,964 crore through better tax compliance and plugging gaps in assessment

Team TOI

The Rs 4,732 crore budget of Bengaluru West City Corporation (BWCC), which was presented on Saturday, leans heavily on improving the internal revenue streams with khata regularisation identified as a key driver of resource mobilisation.

BWCC, the largest of the five city corporations and with the highest number of wards (a total of 112), is dotted by some of the oldest localities including those that are home to Kempegowda's towers and two major national highways (Mysuru and Tumakuru highways). The corporation is making earnest attempts to fix its financial fundamentals by turning the spotlight on properties. While revenue from tax-related income (including property tax) is pegged at Rs 1,074 crore (23 % of the revenue sources) the corporation's dependence on central and state grants (including capital grants) is 30 per cent.

While bringing more properties under the tax net will be its priority, the corporation plans to ride high on the state govt's green signal to convert B-khata (properties without clear titles) into A-khata (legally compliant properties). BWCC commissioner KV Rajendra said the move is expected to generate a substantial Rs 563 crore this year alone, making it one of the single largest contributors to the corporation's revenue basket. "There are about 2.5 lakh B-khata properties in the BWCC limits. Even if 15,000 of the 1.5 lakh larger properties convert to A-khata, we can get nearly Rs 3 lakh from each property. We expect to get around Rs 600 crore from this source. We have received nearly 3,000 applications which are being verified. Around 800 of these are at the citizen payment stage. Once people are convinced, they will come forward in larger numbers for khata conversion," Rajendra said.

Beyond the numbers, officials say the khata conversion move could unlock wider economic benefits: it will bring more properties into the formal tax system, facilitate higher property valuations, improved access to institutional finance for homeowners, and a boost to real estate activity across the western parts of the city.

A key focus remains achieving a revenue target of Rs 1,964 crore, largely through better tax compliance and plugging gaps in assessment. The corporation is rolling out online systems that allow property owners to submit documents and obtain approvals digitally.

This initiative alone is expected to add another Rs 18 crore in revenue. This apart, civic assets (from community halls to land parcels) are set to be monetised through a contactless digital platform, further strengthening non-tax revenues.

₹9 Crore Set Aside To Fight Mosquitoes

BWCC has reserved Rs 9 crore to deploy gangmen and autos division-wise for spraying, fogging, and power spraying programmes

Park Maintenance

496 parks; Rs 47.5 crore for maintenance; Rs. 6.3 crore for upgrade. This apart, plans are on to establish parks for specially-abled persons and pets

3-Day Students' Tour

High school students from corporation schools will be taken on a three-day 'Karnataka Darshana' educational tour, covering historical sites in Kittur Karnataka, Kalyana Karnataka, and coastal regions

Bridge To Be Demolished

Under the Peenya Industrial Area Division, the bridge constructed across the major stormwater drain in Vidyanagar (ward no 39 – Chokkasandra) will be demolished as it is in a dilapidated condition and a new bridge will be built at a cost of Rs 1 crore

Resuming Repair Work

Rs 3 crore will be spent on completing the construction of observation tower in Kumaraswamy Park and Rs 5 crore on the development of Dr Rajkumar Kalakshetra, established in memory of the actor Dr Rajkumar, in Rajajinagar

Road Widening For Total Cost Of ₹8cr

Some of the major roads to be widened include:

- Ittamadu Road | 10m to 18m (length: 5km)
- Kurubarahalli Main Road | 12m to 24m (length: 1.4km)
- Mahalakshmipura Access Road | 15m to 24m (length: 3km)
- Hanumanthnagar Main Road | 12m to 18m (length: 4.5km)
- Herohalli Access Road | 9.5m to 15m (length: 0.9km)
- Thyagarajanagar Main Road | 12m to 24m (length: 1.3km)
- Road from Hosakerehalli Main Road to Outer Ring Road | 12m to 24m (length: 1.9km)
- Road from Katriguppe Main Road to 50 Feet Road Vidyapeeta Circle | 12m to 24m (length: 0.8km)

LITTLE RELIEF: With only Rs 12 crore for the Bannerghatta Road project, well short of the estimated requirement of Rs 60 crore, concerns have been raised about quality of work

NO BALM FOR SOUTH B'LURU's infra troubles

Team TOI

South Bengaluru residents may have to endure critical infrastructure bottlenecks for at least another year, if the FY 2026–27 budget of the Bengaluru South City Corporation (BSCC) is any indication. Presented Saturday, the budget offers no clear allocations or detailed roadmap for key projects such as the Begur Road corridor, improvements at Outer Ring Road (ORR) junctions, and the long-pending Ejipura Elevated Corridor — initiatives that could have provided much-needed relief to commuters and residents alike.

The absence of firm financial commitments for the high-impact mobility interventions has raised concerns over prioritisation and execution, particularly as congestion continues to worsen across South Bengaluru.

The BSCC civic budget, with an outlay of over Rs 3,800 crore, instead seeks to emphasise select stretches such as Bannerghatta Road and give a parallel push on lake rejuvenation, highlighting a shift in immediate focus rather than a comprehensive mobility strategy. The lake rejuvenation proposal, however, holds the promise of checking flooding by overflowing waterbodies during monsoon in the region.

The 10km Bannerghatta Road stretch from Dairy Circle to NICE Road has been proposed for development this year. "The corridor, currently in a deteriorated condition due to years of neglect and repeated utility works, continues to pose significant challenges for commuters. Broken surfaces, uneven footpaths and poorly restored patches have rendered large sections of the road nearly non-motorable," a senior engineer from BSCC said.

"Although the responsibility for restoring the road was initially expected to be handled by BMRCL as part of the Pink Line Metro works, it has now been transferred to the corporation," he added.

However, with only Rs 12 crore being allocated for the project, far short of the estimated requirement of Rs 60 crore, only basic asphalting can be undertaken, raising concerns about the longevity and quality of the work, he admitted.

The corporation is exploring additional funding options, including a proposal to secure about Rs 30 crore from the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA). With the Pink Line Metro expected to increase traffic along the corridor, the urgency to address Bannerghatta Road conditions has grown, but financial constraints continue to limit the scope of intervention. For daily commuters, the delay has already taken a toll, with many describing the stretch as hazardous, particularly for two-wheelers navigating dust, uneven surfaces and poorly laid concrete.

Responding to the criticism, BSCC commissioner Ramesh KN said: "This is an ongoing project. High-density corridors and major infrastructure will be supported through Central grants. The GBA budget is primarily for corporation-level works. For areas like Banashankari, feasibility is still under evaluation, and planning is under way. We could not take it up in this budget."

Even as key mobility projects remain unaddressed in the budget, the corporation has outlined selective road development measures, including Rs 50 crore for road widening under the RMP 2015 Comprehensive Development Plan, Rs 20 crore for Subramanyapura Road widening and Rs 40 crore for improvements from Begur Main Road to Begur Koppa Road. Additionally, arterial and sub-arterial upgrades worth Rs 433 crore are being implemented through CMIDP and SIP grants, focusing on asphalt paving, footpaths, drainage and junction improvements.

"The big positive in the budget is the commitment to ensuring that all wards have offices and local administration. While most infrastructure projects need deeper analysis, the elephant in the room remains land acquisition, given the failure of TDR and the low allocation for acquisition. A key missing element is a clear plan to address last-mile connectivity and congestion in a holistic manner

Vishnu Prasad | MEMBER, SAVE BELLANDUR FORUM

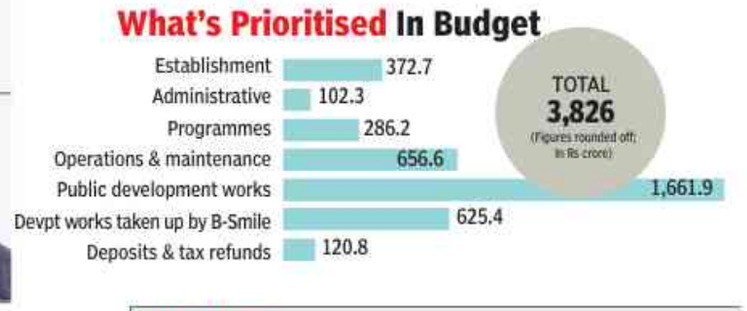
"South Bengaluru faces a huge problem when it comes to garbage and blackspots. The surroundings of Banashankari temple are always covered with garbage. Even the garbage collection vehicles are neither clean nor punctual

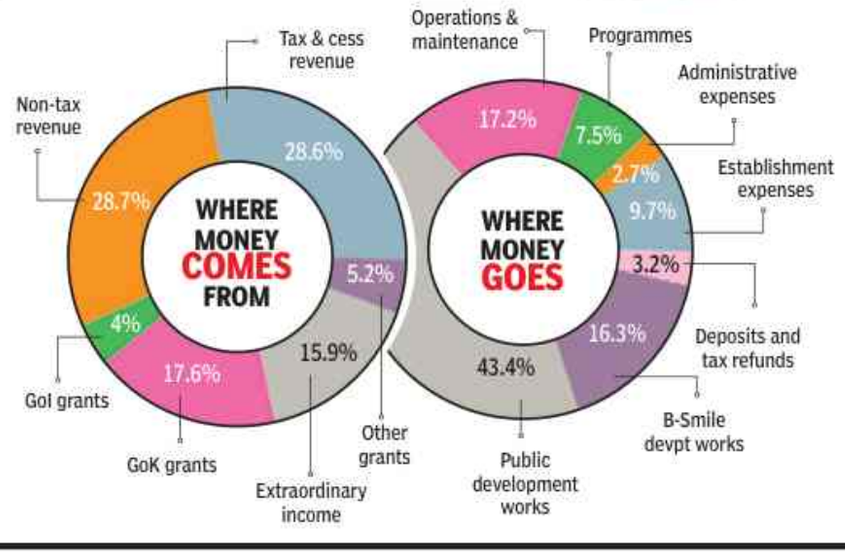
Padmaja Mohan | RESIDENT OF KONANAKUNTE CROSS

"I am also not satisfied with the waste management allocation — there is a need for more focus given the scale of issues on the ground. We are dealing with multiple civic problems — broken footpaths, garbage, illegal flex banners and encroachments. What we really need is more marshals in each ward. With better on-ground supervision, issues can be addressed more efficiently

Dhruv NK | CITIZEN, UTTARAHALLI

What's Prioritised In Budget





What's In The Pipeline?

- Begur and Madiwala lakes are likely to get **boating facilities** on a pilot basis on a PPP model
- It is proposed to establish a special **'Smruti Van'** (memorial forest) by giving priority to trees with medicinal value within South corporation limits
- To absorb excess rainwater and reduce urban flooding, **sponge parks** are proposed to be developed within the limits; Rs 2 crore has been earmarked
- A new **'hub & spoke' model** will be implemented for collecting blood samples from patients visiting the 25 Urban Primary Health Centres and 49 Namma Clinics, and testing will be carried out in empanelled private laboratories
- A **mobile crematorium** will be introduced for scientific disposal of carcasses of small animals, birds, and livestock found dead in public places within the corporation limits

Trading trap: Techie falls for marriage offer, loses ₹18.7L

Fraudster On Dating App Forced Him To Invest

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@timesofindia.com

The miscreant cited her 'wealthy' family expectations and pushed the man into investing larger sums, stating that they would need at least Rs 4 crore for wedding

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Bengaluru: A seemingly genuine connection on a dating app turned into a costly deception, with a 29-year-old software engineer losing Rs 18.7 lakh and was left emotionally devastated.

Advik (name changed), a resident of New Thippasandra, in his complaint with East Cyber Crime police, stated that it all began on Nov 4, 2025, when he connected with a woman on dating app Flutrr. She introduced herself as Anjali Kushlani from Mumbai.

After a few days, they moved to WhatsApp, speaking daily and building what appeared to be a serious relationship. After two weeks, he assumed that she was rich from her conversations and the photos she sent him. Advik told her he was from a poor family and lived in a slum area. Gaining his trust with reassurances about his modest background, the woman promised to support his growth in future. "I only want a good man," she told him.

The conversation soon shifted to online trading. Despite Advik's initial reluctance, as he had already taken a loan to construct his house, she persuaded him to invest a small amount, assuring him of guidance. Following her instructions, he joined a Telegram channel linked to a trading platform and made his first deposit of Rs 40,000 on Nov 28. Early transactions showed small profits, even allowing a withdrawal of $100 (Rs 8,000), which further strengthened his trust.

Anjali then shared another trading link with him on WhatsApp. Encouraged to invest more, Advik began borrowing money from friends, eventually depositing Rs 5.6 lakh by Dec 25. He insisted that Anjali meet him; she promised to do so on his birthday.

Advik lost his younger brother on Jan 14 this year. The fraud took a darker turn when he was unable to withdraw funds, with the platform citing trading conditions and telling him that he did not have Rs 10,000 profit or loss. Anjali suggested that he carry out a couple of more trades, after which he could withdraw the money. He was emotionally vulnerable, and she maintained contact without asking him to invest more, expressing concern and deepening his trust.

In Feb, she intensified pressure, weaving promises of marriage and citing her "wealthy family expectations" to push him into investing larger sums, stating that they would need at least Rs 4 crore for marriage. Under constant persuasion, he took a loan and added Rs 10 lakh, followed by additional deposits, while she appeared to "match" his contributions by adding Rs 5 lakh to maintain credibility. He again invested Rs 3.1 lakh; in total, he invested Rs 18.7 lakh.

By mid-March, the trading account reflected activity and profits. But on March 21, communication abruptly stopped. Calls went unanswered, and messages were undelivered. When Anjali resurfaced briefly, she claimed her house had been raided by the Enforcement Directorate and demanded an additional $1,000. By then, Advik realised he had been duped. A case has been registered under Information Technology Act and BNS Section 318 (cheating).

Delivery agent booked for marrying minor girl

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Police are looking for a food-delivery agent in his 20s for allegedly marrying a minor girl. She is five months' pregnant now.

The suspect has been identified as Nataraj, resident of Slum Board in Sadaramangala-Kadugodi. Based on a complaint filed by the legal officer, district child protection unit Tilakesh Kumar K, Kadugodi police registered a case against Nataraj under sections of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act-2012 and Child Marriage Prohibition Act.

Police also booked the minor girl's mother and Nataraj's parents for their alleged role in the offence.

"Nataraj is from Tamil Nadu and knew the girl's family for a long time. The girl is a school dropout and was in love with Nataraj. After the relationship came to light, their families decided to get them married. However, none of them thought of the legal consequences," an investigating officer said.

In a twist, the marriage made another food-delivery agent unhappy as he wanted to marry the girl. "The disappointed agent approached the child protection unit and filed a complaint. Based on his statement, officials cross-checked the girl's age and found she was 17 years and six months old," the officer added. Nataraj is absconding and his mobile phone is switched off.

Students ride triple on bike, 2 die in crash

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Two engineering students died and another sustained injuries when the Bullet motorbike on which they were riding triple collided with a truck near Murur handpost junction, Ramanagara, in the wee hours of Saturday.

The victims are Abhishek V and Manoj Kumar, both aged 21. Hailing from Belur and Hassan, respectively, they were studying in two colleges on Hesaraghatta main road and at Soladevanahalli.

Their friend Nandan, also an engineering student, is undergoing treatment at a hospital. Police said the students, staying in a hostel, went out for late-night dinner. The truck carrying ragi sacks was entering the road from a side lane. Abhishek, who was riding the bike, failed to notice small speed-breakers and rammed the truck. He and Manoj died instantly.

Two youngsters caught with ganja at rly station

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Railway Protection Force (RPF) personnel stationed at KSR Bengaluru station caught two youngsters with dry ganja worth around Rs 5 lakh hidden in their backpacks.

Syed Irfan, 22, was caught leaving the station through a rare exit after the arrival of 16378 Ernakulam Intercity Express. Twenty minutes later, Aleem Pasha, 22, from the same train and using the same route, was caught. Both were carrying the drugs in their backpacks. RPF said they were neighbours living in north Bengaluru.

Tunnel road vs Lalbagh: GSI panel to study impact

Niranjan.Kaggere@timesofindia.com

File photo

MONUMENT OF CONTENTION

The constitution of an experts' committee comes close on the heels of a demand by Bangalore South MP Tejasvi Surya who urged GSI to conduct investigation on possible damage to the national geological monument

Bengaluru: Nearly five months after demanding an impact assessment study on the national geological monument at Lalbagh Botanical Garden due to the proposed tunnel road project by state govt, Geological Survey of India (GSI) constituted an experts' committee Friday and sought a detailed report in three weeks.

The constitution of an experts' committee comes close on the heels of a demand by Bangalore South MP Tejasvi Surya who urged GSI to conduct investigation on possible damage to the national geological monument.

Inspecting the proposed tunnel project site at Lalbagh in Oct 2025, Surya interacted with officials from Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) and representatives of GSI. Officials from the GSI said no consultation was held with them on the proposed work.

Surya said the tunnel will pass beneath Kempegowda Tower and Peninsular Gneissic Complex — a national geological monument and geo-heritage site at Lalbagh believed to be as old as three billion years — and demanded a geological assessment study by GSI. After five months of the demand, GSI has now constituted a committee of five expert geologists from various parts of India to carry out geological and geotechnical appraisal of Lalbagh. The committee will be headed by KV Maruthi, currently working as deputy director general and regional mission head of southern region at GSI. The committee has been directed to visit the site and conduct necessary field inspection and assessment and is expected to submit a report in three weeks.

The study assumes significance as the proposed tunnel project is set to utilise nearly six acres of land between Lalbagh and the nearby Ashoka Pillar junction for a parking facility, along with commercial spaces and a rooftop garden above the tunnel. The plan also involves digging and deep excavation within Lalbagh to deploy tunnel boring machines for the construction.

Cigarette scam snuffed out: Father-son duo among five arrested at airport

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Twenty cartons containing two lakh fake cigarette sticks were seized

Bengaluru: In a major crackdown on counterfeit tobacco products trade, Kempegowda International Airport police, in coordination with a private firm, busted an international fake cigarette smuggling racket and detained five suspects, including a father-son duo believed to be kingpins of the transaction.

The suspects have been identified as Abdul Basheed and his son Mohammed Ashiq, both residents of Bengaluru, along with their associates, Mohammed Anwar, Mohammed Ansari and Ghulam Hussain Khan.

Acting on a tip-off from brand protection service provider firm, police intercepted the accused at the airport after they landed from Cambodia Friday around 12.30am and uncovered a large-scale smuggling operation involving counterfeit cigarettes worth over Rs 40 lakh, according to the MRP price of original products. A total of 20 cartons containing around two lakh fake cigarette sticks were seized.

Each carton reportedly contained around 10,000 cigarette sticks. The accused procured these cigarettes, allegedly manufactured in Cambodia, at extremely low prices, paying around Rs 25,000 per 10,000 sticks and around Rs 2.5 per cigarette.

The counterfeit cigarettes were then sold in Bengaluru for Rs 16 per stick to shopkeepers, significantly undercutting genuine brands priced between Rs 22 and Rs 24, thereby, attracting unsuspecting consumers while reaping massive profits. The racketeers are duplicating popular cigarette brands such as ITC and Esse, raising serious concerns about consumer safety and trademark violations. A case has been registered under the Copyright Act, and further investigation is underway to trace the larger supply chain and distribution network.

Paediatric facility gets 1,000-bed makeover

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

TOI

EXPANSION MODE: The state-run Indira Gandhi Institute of Child Health houses advanced facilities, including a robotic surgery centre

Bengaluru: With the inauguration of a new 450-bed superspeciality block Saturday, the state-run paediatric centre Indira Gandhi Institute of Child Health (IGICH) has become a 1,000-bed facility.

The eight-floor building houses advanced facilities, including a robotic surgery centre, fetal medicine unit, and renal, liver and bone marrow transplant centres, which are expected to be operational soon.

The expansion comes amid a steady rise in patient load. According to director Dr Sanjay KS, the hospital treats around two lakh outpatients and 25,000–30,000 inpatients annually, with a child survival rate of 92%.

Inaugurating the facility, medical education minister Sharan Prakash Patil said the hospital serves patients beyond Karnataka, including those from West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh, and emphasised the importance of strengthening govt healthcare facilities. "When treatment is provided in govt hospitals, a large number of common and middle-class people can benefit from it," he pointed out.

A Clubfoot Centre of Excellence was also inaugurated in collaboration with Cure International India. The centre will use AI-based models to treat clubfoot, a congenital condition where a baby's foot is twisted out of shape or position. "The inauguration of the centre is a major step toward eliminating disability caused by clubfoot. Through collaboration with govt of Karnataka, we are committed to providing free, quality treatment and ensuring that every child has the opportunity to walk and thrive," said Dr Mathew Varghese, medical director, Cure International India.

Terrorist remark: Police notice to prof shortly

▶Continued from page 1

When the professor continued to behave inappropriately, the chairperson told him to leave midway through a lecture, sources said. As the video went viral, the university suspended him. Jawahar Doreswamy, chancellor, PES University, said the varsity authorities were still verifying the authenticity of the video.

"This is unacceptable. The faculty holds a PhD. We don't want to suppress anything. We will take necessary action," the chancellor said.

"All our lectures are recorded. We have asked our technical team to check authenticity of the video. We are trying to get to the truth. Meanwhile, we have kept the lecturer under suspension. Disciplinary committee will check evidence before initiating further action against him," Doreswamy said.

"All our faculty members are trained on how to deal with situations in classrooms. At times, there can be disciplinary issues and people can overreact. We are looking at our protocol on what briefings were given to adjunct faculty members," he added.

"I would like to clarify that the word used was not directed at any [specific] student, but I understand and acknowledge that it was inappropriate," the lecturer said in his apology.

Police told **TOI** they approached college authorities and students, asking them to file a complaint for them to initiate legal action against the lecturer. "The university management, though, told us to wait for a while," a senior police officer said.

Girinagar police have registered a suo motu criminal case against the professor under various provisions of BNS, including Section 299, which deals with deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious sentiments. A senior officer from Girinagar police station said a notice will soon be issued to the professor as part of investigation.

Keep an eye out for rising cases of computer vision syndrome: Doctors

Jahnavi@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Have you been feeling a nagging sensation in your eyes, often accompanied by redness and watering? Then you might be experiencing computer vision syndrome (CVS), say ophthalmologists, as a significant section of the IT city's working population shows symptoms of the condition.

CVS is a group of eye and vision-related problems caused by prolonged use of screens. "Existing research shows 66–70% of working professionals have CVS, while nearly 90% of those with screen time exceeding three hours experience some symptoms. In our own practice, we have seen at least 47% of patients present with signs of CVS," said Dr Naren Shetty, director, HOD cataract & refractive, clinical & translational scientist, Narayana Nethralaya.

While CVS is increasingly being reported across age groups — from children as young as nine to elderly individuals in their 90s — experts say working professionals remain the most vulnerable. "On average, I see 4–5 patients per day with symptoms related to computer vision syndrome. And this is in the central part of Bengaluru. So, if we are seeing these many cases here, the numbers in tech-heavy areas like Electronics City and Whitefield are expected to be even higher," said Dr Mahima Mahesh, consultant ophthalmologist, Dr Agarwals Eye Hospital, Coles Road.

She added, "The human eye is naturally at rest when looking at distant objects. But for near tasks, the eye muscles have to actively work to focus. So, if someone is working on screens all day, the same group of eye muscles is continuously engaged, leading to fatigue by the end of the day."

Dr Savitha Arun, senior eye surgeon and medical superintendent, Nethradhama Super Speciality Eye Hospital, said CVS is not limited to eye-related issues. "Many patients also report neck pain, sleeplessness and backache, often due to poor posture while sitting in front of screens for long hours without breaks. Ergonomics plays a significant role in these symptoms," she said.

Management of CVS is holistic and involves addressing multiple factors, starting with symptomatic treatment for eye discomfort and evaluating whether corrective glasses are needed. "We also guide patients on proper ergonomics, including posture and workstation setup, along with emphasising regular breaks and healthy screen habits, while treating dryness if present. In cases where there is muscle imbalance, specific eye exercises are prescribed, with more severe cases requiring in-clinic therapy," Dr Savitha said.

Doctors also stress adopting the 20-20-20 rule — every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds. Dr Naren added, "Instead of positioning the screen at eye level, placing it about 4–5cm below eye level can reduce strain, as the eyelids offer better protection when the eyes are directed slightly downward," he said.

HOW TO TAKE CARE WHILE WORKING

- 20-20-20 rule (take 20-second break to view something 20ft away every 20 minutes)
- Position screen 4–5cm below eye level
- Blink consciously to prevent dryness
- Maintain proper posture and ergonomics
- Use lubricating drops or blue light/anti-glare glasses if needed

Research shows 66–70% of working professionals have CVS, while nearly 90% of those with screen time over 3 hours have symptoms, says expert

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DLs: RTOs' 252/200 scores prompt CAG to raise flag

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Bengaluru: An audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) has exposed how regional transport offices (RTOs) across Karnataka routinely issued driving licences far beyond their prescribed daily testing capacity, raising serious concerns over the integrity of the system.

LIMIT EXCEEDED

The report revealed that even RTOs equipped with automated driving testing tracks (ADTTs), which are designed to ensure standardised and objective evaluation, have a maximum capacity of conducting 200 driving tests per day. However, several centres were found to have conducted between 252 and 495 tests in a single day, clearly exceeding the operational limits.

Electronics City RTO emerged as a stark example, having conducted more than 200 tests on 109 separate days, suggesting that licences may have been granted without adequate scrutiny of applicants' driving skills.

The situation is even more troubling in majority of RTOs that lack automated systems. With only 12 centres equipped with ADTTs, 55 RTOs continue to rely on manual testing, where the audit found widespread irregularities. In many cases, multiple applicants were tested simultaneously under minimal supervision.

Even at automated tracks, the audit flagged lapses. Despite the use of sensors and cameras, multiple candidates were assessed at once, increasing the likelihood of errors and diluting the effectiveness of technology-driven testing.

The audit also flagged delays in dispatch of smart cards despite fees being collected. At the time of the audit, RTOs were charging Rs 212 for a card along with Rs 50 for postal delivery.

Analysis of Vahan MIS data revealed that between May 24, 2022, and March 31, 2024, out of 12.3 lakh smart card applications across nine RTOs, 11.6 lakh (94%) were approved, but the dispatch status of 8.2 lakh cards (71%) remained pending despite collection of postal charges.

Between Nov 2021 and May 2022, Rs 7.1 crore was collected for 3.6 lakh vehicles, but no smart cards were issued. Instead, RTOs issued laminated cards without chips, in violation of rules, the report found.

Since '23, KSRTC refurbished 18% of 8.9k buses to check expenses

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Bengaluru: Nearly 18% of the buses operated by KSRTC have undergone refurbishment since 2023, with the corporation prioritising better fleet utilisation while keeping capital spending on new procurements in check. Of its total fleet of 8,900 buses, 1,568 have been refurbished, including 32 Volvo vehicles.

As per norms fixed by the corporation and under revised guidelines, ordinary buses should be scrapped after crossing 11 lakh km of operations or on completing 15 years of service. In the case of premier buses like Volvo, operations are permitted up to 15 lakh km or 15 years. Data shared by the corporation shows that more than half the fleet has already crossed the stipulated kilometre threshold, but continues in service as these buses are yet to complete 15 years.

File pic

UP FOR LONGER SERVICE

Officials said the 15-year scrapping rule follows directions issued by Union govt in Jan 2023.

"At present, none of our buses crossed 15 years. However, once a bus crosses 11 lakh km, we assess its operational efficiency. If refurbishment is economically viable, we take it up in our workshops. If a bus is in a poor condition, it is removed from the fleet through scrapping. Refurbishment helps in optimal utilisation until the bus completes 15 years," a senior KSRTC official said.

Responding to concerns over more than half the fleet crossing the 11 lakh km mark, the official said, "Following Covid-19 outbreak, KSRTC did not induct new buses for a couple of years... However, in the last two years, we have inducted 1,138 new buses and scrapped older ones. In the current financial year, 450 buses have been scrapped. In the coming months, we plan to induct 800 new buses, including Pallakki non-AC and around 70 premier buses," the official added.

Among the other three corporations, North Western Karnataka Road Transport Corporation has 257 buses that have crossed the 11 lakh km mark, while Kalyana Karnataka Road Transport Corporation has 2,196 such buses. BMTC does not have any buses that have crossed the 11 lakh km mark.

Two-language policy is not anti-Hindi: CM

Mysuru: Chief minister **Siddaramaiah** Saturday said the two-language policy adopted by state govt for SSLC examinations is not against Hindi language.

Announcing that the two-language policy will be implemented from the current academic year itself, he said a third language will no longer be mandatory for 100 marks in SSLC.

Speaking to reporters, the CM clarified that the move is not against Hindi. "This is not about opposing Hindi. There is nothing to suggest Hindi should not be taught. However, it should not be made compulsory for examinations," he said.

Recalling his own schooling, Siddaramaiah added, "During my time, Hindi was not compulsory. Since it was optional, many of us did not study it."

On objections raised by private school associations, he said disagreement is natural in a democracy.

Will watch IPL after bypolls: Siddaramaiah

On the IPL, Siddaramaiah said: "I like cricket, but I will watch matches when I'm done with the bypolls to Davanagere South and Bagalkot." He said MLAs and MLCs have been receiving IPL tickets in the past also. "Earlier, one ticket was given; now two tickets will be provided. Those who wish to attend can go, and those who do not want to can decline," he said. TNN

Bear attacks youths & shreds their bike before locals trap it

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Panic gripped Kodamballi village in Channapatna taluk of Ramanagara (Bengaluru South) district Saturday morning when a sloth bear strayed into human habitat and attacked two bike-borne youths. Hours later, a group of villagers managed to capture the animal and handed it over to the forest department.

According to the villagers, two youngsters riding a motorbike on the village outskirts were suddenly attacked by the bear. Though they managed to escape, the animal clung to the vehicle, forcing them to abandon it and flee. The bear later tore its seat apart with its claws.

Alarmed by the incident, the youths alerted others in the village. Within minutes, a large group of residents, armed with sticks and nets, rushed to the spot.

"The bear was still at the spot when all of us reached there. We alerted both forest and police officials. By the time we laid the net to capture the bear by surrounding it from all sides, a few youngsters, along with forest staff, overpowered the bear and trapped it in the net," explained a villager.

Police officials said during the operation, a forest department staffer, Muthu Naik, and a villager, Thammanna, suffered injuries as the bear clawed at them.

"They were rushed to a nearby medical facility where doctors said both of them are out of danger," a police officer said.

The forest department later subjected the sloth bear to veterinary examination.

TOI

BEAR WITH IT: A sloth bear, which attacked two bike-borne youths, appears curious about the vehicle the duo left in panic at Kodamballi village in Channapatna taluk of Ramanagara district Saturday. (R) Residents catch hold of the animal later

BJP MLA declines to accept free IPL tickets

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: The controversy over free IPL passes for legislators continues to escalate, with dissent emerging within political parties.

BJP's Rajajinagar MLA **Suresh Kumar** termed it "unfortunate" that legislators sought tickets on the floor of the assembly to watch matches at M Chinnaswamy Stadium. He said he will not accept any free IPL tickets.

On Saturday, he wrote to assembly speaker UT Khader, asking that no IPL tickets be issued in his name. His decision comes amid criticism of legislators seeking tickets, with the controversy snowballing into a larger debate on VIP treatment and political entitlement.

"It is deplorable that legislators asked for tickets and special privileges when the tragedy in which 11 innocent people lost their lives is still fresh in our memory," Suresh Kumar said, referring to the stampede at the stadium in June last year.

He recalled that people on the streets have asked him, "Do legislators go to the assembly to discuss people's problems or to seek such favours for themselves?... I am at a loss for replies to such questions."

JD(S) functionary Nikhil Kumaraswamy termed free IPL passes to legislators discriminatory, questioning the need for such a privilege.

Following demand from a section of legislators, state govt Friday announced that two passes each would be given to MLAs, MPs and ministers for the IPL opener between RCB and Sunrisers Hyderabad Saturday, hosted in Bengauru.

Realty firm to help build Metro station

Bengaluru: Bagmane Developers Pvt Ltd signed a grant agreement with BMRCL to support construction of DRDO Sports Complex Metro station on Outer Ring Road (ORR) corridor under Phase-2A of Namma Metro project.

The agreement signed Friday involves a contribution of Rs 40 crore from Bagmane Developers, of which Rs 20 crore has already been remitted. The company will also fund improvements of the station's interiors and façade.

BMRCL said Namma Metro will grant naming rights to the developer for 20 years. The proposed name will be Bagmane DRDO Sports Complex Metro Station, subject to govt approval. BMRCL has set a Dec 2026 deadline for opening the Blue line from Central Silk Board to KR Pura. TNN

BEO drives student to SSLC exam hours after father's death

Udaya Sagar | TNN

Shivamogga: Swift intervention by a block education officer (BEO) ensured a class 10 student from Dyavanakere village did not lose a crucial academic year even as he grappled with the sudden loss of his father.

Shivamogga taluk BEO Ramesh stepped in early Saturday to help Pritam appear for his SSLC exams just hours after his father, 45-year-old Manjunath, died late Friday night following a suicide attempt, reportedly linked to financial distress.

TOI

BEO Ramesh (L) with Pritam at the latter's home at Dyavanakere, Shivamogga taluk, Saturday

BEO Ramesh's timely action kept the student's academic year on course despite the tragedy

Understanding the boy's fragile emotional state, Ramesh visited the family's home, consoled Pritam and his mother, and personally took the student in his official vehicle to the examination centre at Ayanur, ensuring he reached in time to write the maths paper.

Ramesh told **TOI** later that the student was anxious but resolute.

"He promised he would complete his exams. I assured him of full support until he joins PU," the BEO said, adding that teachers have been instructed to ensure the boy faces no hurdles while appearing for his remaining papers.

School education department has also promised assistance for Pritam's future education. Zilla panchayat CEO Hemanth visited the family to convey condolences and said support would be extended as needed.

Local residents, including SDMC members, village leaders and school staff, stood by the family as Manjunath's last rites were held later in the day. SDMC member Sudur Shivanna said the BEO's response was prompt and compassionate.

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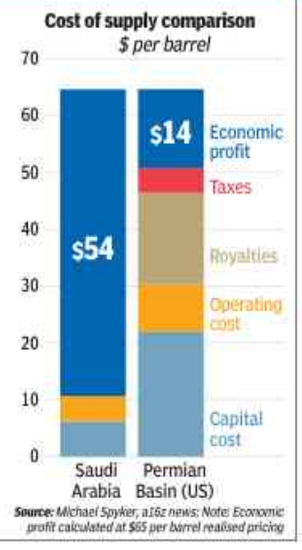
STATISTICS A slice of life in numbers

Why Saudi oil still wins the profit war

Oil prices have been swinging amid war in West Asia, but when it comes to profits, Saudi Arabia still scores over US, whose oil industry is not exposed to the threat of drone and missile strikes. Lower production costs means its oil enjoys higher margins than US shale oil



Source: Michael Spyker, a16z news; Note: Economic profit calculated at $65 per barrel realised pricing

80% Indians cleared by tests are struck by heart attack

Western Models Miss Specific Patterns: Study

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HITS EARLIER, BEHAVES DIFFERENTLY

80% not flagged high-risk before first heart attack

- Only 11%-20% identified by current calculators
- Heart disease strikes earlier, around 54 years
- Risk hidden despite normal weight (abdominal fat)
- Diabetes with low HDL and high triglycerides common
- Western tools miss Indian risk patterns
- Many stuck in grey 'intermediate risk' zone
- 'Low risk' label may be misleading

New Delhi: He had no red flags. No "high-risk" tag. By standard medical calculators, he was not the kind of patient doctors worry about. Then came the heart attack — sudden and without warning. Doctors say this is no longer unusual. A major Indian study suggests it may be the norm.

In a retrospective analysis of more than 5,000 Indian patients, widely used global heart risk calculators failed to identify most people at risk, with around 80% of those who suffered a first heart attack not flagged as high-risk beforehand. Researchers led by Dr Mohit Dayal Gupta at GB Pant Hospital, Delhi, says Western models miss India-specific risk patterns, often placing patients in low or moderate categories despite underlying danger.

These models are used by doctors to decide who needs treatment, but the study found they often misclassify risk and sometimes give conflicting results. Across models, only 11%-20% of patients were labelled high-risk, even though all eventually had a heart attack.

"Indian patients and population behave totally differently. We have different risk factors, different patterns and hence Western scores may not always be appropriate," said Dr Gupta.

At the core of the problem is a mismatch. Most of these risk calculators were designed using Western populations, where heart disease tends to occur later. In India, it strikes earlier and behaves differently — the study found the average age of patients was just 54, underscoring how premature heart disease has become.

Researchers say Indians show a distinct "South Asian phenotype". Heart risk appears earlier, often with diabetes and insulin resistance even at normal body weight. Cholesterol patterns are misleading — low HDL and high triglycerides, while LDL may not be very high. Many also have hidden abdominal fat despite appearing lean, a risk missed by BMI-based assessments. Smoking and psychosocial stress, along with traditional risk factors like diabetes, smoking and dyslipidemia, further add to this hidden burden.

This is why Western risk scores underperform. They rely heavily on age and LDL cholesterol, leading to underestimation in younger Indians. As a result, many patients fall into an "intermediate risk" category — a grey zone that often delays preventive treatment. Crucially, these models ignore key drivers like insulin resistance, lipoprotein (a), ApoB, central obesity and chronic kidney disease.

The impact is significant. These scores determine who gets preventive drugs and closer monitoring. When risk is underestimated, intervention often comes only after a major event.

The findings have renewed calls for customised risk scores, as Indian populations remain poorly represented in global datasets. Experts say that until such tools are developed, risk calculators must be used alongside clinical judgment, including family history, diabetes, psychosocial stress and early screening.

1st in a decade: Great Indian Bustard chick born in wild in Guj

Himanshu Kaushik & Vimal Bhatia | TNN

Ahmedabad\Jaisalmer: In a landmark moment for wildlife conservation, Gujarat has recorded the birth of a Great Indian Bustard (GIB) chick in the wild after nearly a decade as the egg was moved 770km from a breeding centre in Rajasthan's Jaisalmer and incubated by a foster mother.

The chick hatched on March 26 in the grasslands of Gujarat's Kutch signifying a significant breakthrough for one of India's most endangered bird species. The moment wasn't free of worries, though. Officials said the mother and chick could not be traced for a while, fuelling apprehensions of harm. However, they were eventually sighted on Saturday.

Union environment minister Bhupender Yadav hailed the novel conservation initiative called Jumpstart Approach. "The effort was planned a year back, coordinated by MoEFCC (environment ministry), along with forest departments of Rajasthan and Gujarat, and Wildlife Institute of India," Yadav posted on X.

The last successful breeding of the species in Gujarat was in 2016.

Since then, the situation worsened dramatically, especially after the disappearance of the last known male bustard in the state in 2016.

SIGNIFICANT BREAKTHROUGH

This male GIB was the last born in the wild in the state. With only three surviving females left in Kutch, all subsequent eggs laid over the years were infertile, pushing the species to the brink of local extinction in the state.

Under the Jumpstart method this time, the fertile egg was ferried from the breeding centre in Jaisalmer's Sam to Naliya in Kutch. Officials created a halt-free corridor to ensure the safety of the egg during the 19-hour journey in a portable incubator.

The egg, already incubated for about 21 days, was placed in the nest on March 22 when the female temporarily left to forage.

"This egg hatched four days later, on March 26, completing a carefully timed and executed conservation effort," an expert said, adding that bustard eggs typically hatch after 22-24 days of incubation.

Speeding Thar kills man and grandsons

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Gurgaon: A 60-year-old man and his two grandsons — aged 8 and 10 — died after a Mahindra Thar ploughed into them on a dark stretch in Pataudi on Friday night. The boys, who were in town from Rajasthan's Alwar to spend their school holidays with their grandfather, had stopped by the side of the road to answer nature's call when the SUV rammed them at almost 80kmph, police said.

The three who died were Subhash (60), a daily wager from Khor village, and his grandsons Ishant (10) and Zaid Khan (8). According to police, the accident occurred around 10pm on Khor-Lokra road as the three were walking back home after visiting relatives. Subhash's brother Saleem (42) lodged a police complaint, saying the trio had just left his house in Lokra when the black Thar struck them from behind. The force of the impact threw them off the road, leaving all three critically injured and oozing blood. The SUV eventually came to a halt after crashing into a tree on an unmetalled patch.

CCTV footage from the area captured the sequence of events. It shows Subhash briefly stopping by the roadside, while one of the boys stepped aside. Moments later, as the grandfather gathered both children and stood with them at the edge of the road, the car approached at high speed, failed to negotiate a turn, and slammed into them.

Close shave for mother, son after scooter plunges into 20-ft pit dug for metro rail

Surat: A mother and son had a narrow escape after their scooter plunged into a 20-foot-deep pit dug for a metro project in the Parvat Patiya area on Saturday, **reports Yagnesh Mehta.**

Saurabh Jain (28) and his mother, Rupali Jain (48), were travelling on a scooter from Kabootar Circle when the rider reportedly lost control and rammed into the barricades around the excavation site. The impact caused the two-wheeler to fall into the pit.

Both mother and son sustained minor injuries but are out of danger, officials said. The ground inside the pit was muddy, with stagnant water and loose rectangular paving blocks or stones that could have caused severe injuries. There was also a pipeline running inside.

"They were rescued using an excavator and are currently undergoing treatment," said Haresh Patel, senior deputy general manager of Gujarat Metro Rail Corporation Limited.

Hit-&-run of dental student: Mum couple, insurer to pay ₹1 crore

Rebecca.Samervel
@timesofindia.com

Dipali Lahamate (25) was headed to her brother's convocation on March 24, 2018 when the car jumped a red light and hit her at high speed. She died six days later

Mumbai: A 44-year-old tea-cher, her husband and the insurance company have been ordered to jointly pay nearly Rs 1 crore as total compensation to the family of a 25-year-old dental intern killed in a 2018 hit-and-run. The amount is inclusive of interest.

The legal battle before Motor Accident Claims Tribunal, which spanned eight years, concluded with member R R Patwari ordering the driver, Shikha Zhaveri, the vehicle owner and her husband, Ankur Zhaveri, and insurer Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Co Ltd to pay a compensation of approximately Rs 98.5 lakh for the death of Dipali Lahamate, a BDS graduate.

The tribunal held that the driver was entirely responsible for the fatality after jumping a red signal, rejecting claims that the victim's use of a mobile phone contributed to the accident.

It observed, "The accused driver was duty-bound to stop the vehicle at the traffic signal until the signal turns green. This clearly shows that there was no negligence on the part of the deceased." The tribunal added, "Negligence means failure to exercise the required degree of care which is expected of a prudent driver. When a motor vehicle is being driven with reasonable care, it would ordinarily not meet with accident."

Lahamate was headed to her brother's convocation on March 24, 2018 when she was hit by the Honda City. She suffered severe head injuries and died six days later. The driver and the insurer argued that Dipali was negligent, claiming she was distracted by her phone and stepped onto the road abruptly. However, the tribunal relied on the testimony of a witness who followed the car after the hit-and-run. The witn-ess confirmed that the signal was red for vehicles when the car "came at high speed and struck the woman".

U'khand chief secy gets NGT notice for Mussoorie 'inaction'

Pankul.Sharma
@timesofindia.com

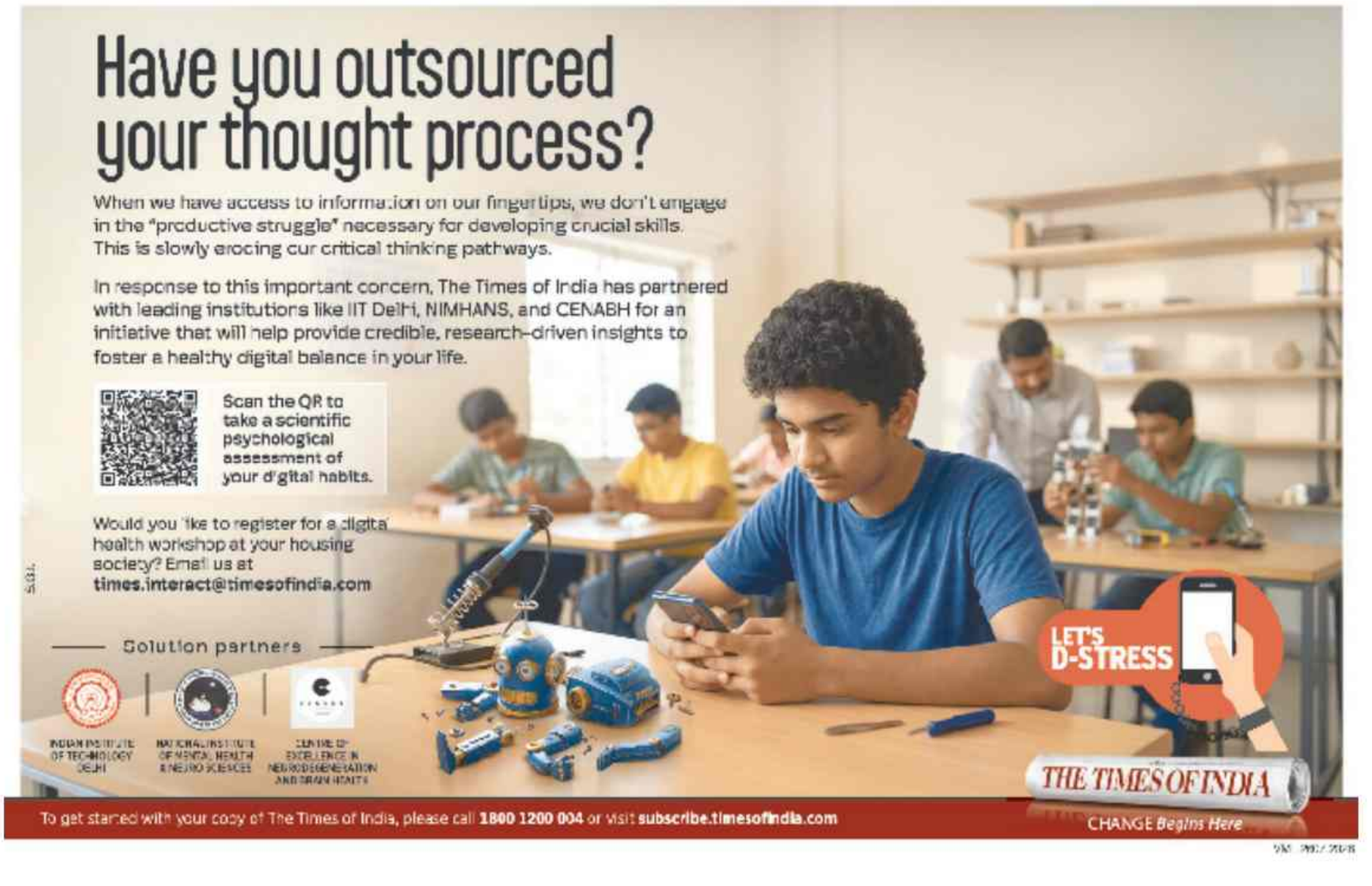
HEADED JOSHIMATH WAY?

Dehradun: National Green Tribunal (NGT) has issued a notice to Uttarakhand's chief secretary over "continued inaction" on environmental concerns in Mussoorie despite the issue being flagged in the aftermath of the 2023 Joshimath crisis.

The green tribunal has directed the chief secretary to file a comprehensive affidavit within four weeks detailing steps taken to implement its earlier orders. It has also asked the counsel for Uttarakhand Pollution Control Board to submit a response.

The tribunal had taken cognisance of the matter bas-ed on newspaper reports that drew a parallel between Mussoorie and Joshimath, where unchecked construction, excessive tourism pressure and poor drainage triggered land subsidence in 2023. The reports warned that Mussoorie was showing early signs of stress, with unregulated construction and infrastructure pressure on its sensitive slopes. NGT had directed the state govt to submit a response outlining preventive and remedial measures.

On March 24, the bench observed that "no concrete action appeared to have been taken". It also examined a report submitted by the additional secretary and found it "failed to adequately address the key issues flagged in the tribunal's May 8, 2025 order". The matter is scheduled to be heard next on July 14.



'Tesseract: The Geometry of Truth', a class act with intellect, empathy, grace — and the audacity of joy'

*An extraordinary theatrical production, unique from West End to Broadway, fusing art, archive, dance, philosophy, nature and AI, staged in Mumbai & seen by **Srijana Mitra Das** at **Times Evoke**:*

Photos: Uma Kadam, TOI

DIFFERENT PAGES IN TIME: 'Tesseract' highlighted the grandeur of the 187-year-old Times of India — and, in a succeeding act, spotlit the state of the 4.5-billion-year-old planet Earth

The search for truth underpins human existence — and our most ancient stories. 'The Epic of Gilgamesh', the oldest known recorded legend on Earth, set in the riverine delta between Iraq, Syria and Turkey, featured an emperor searching between sophisticated cities and cedar jungles, flood plains and underworld, for the truth about life. Homer's 'Iliad' followed Grecian warriors battling for honour, land — and truth. The 'Mahabharata' in India featured a family fighting to establish regal righteousness — but bowing before 'satya'. Every epic captures a restless human mind, raising eternal questions — Why am I here? What is the meaning of my existence? Why do I suffer? How do I gain power? Should I love myself or others? How shall I truly live before I leave?

These are not easy questions. As humanity's archives of literature, art, spiritualism and science show, they offer us a kaleidoscope of answers. Interestingly, most explorations about truth and life, in epics, cinema, laboratory or verse, have been relayed so far through male eyes. Consider, for instance, Akira Kurosawa's 1950 classic film 'Rashomon', which featured four characters, each telling their own version of one event, the story disturbingly violent. The truth, they say, isn't easy to handle — no wonder for some, the search for it has grown exhausting when we already have so much to choose from. In this era of unending choice, saturated by the glamour of products and clamour of views, some even speak of a 'post-truth' world.

Getty Images

RASHO-MAN: Kurosawa's truth via a male gaze

Fortunately, not everyone has succumbed to the intellectual indolence of that — or the frightening end of humanity it signifies. I recently witnessed a unique theatrical production, 'Tesseract: The Geometry of Truth'. This show, exemplary anywhere from the West End to Broadway, staged in Mumbai, showcased truth as shaping us every minute of our life. We live within the intricate geometry, the ceaseless calculus of veritas. The question 'Tesseract' posed, and why it reminded me of the great epics, is — how can we live optimally with the truth?

Envisioned by Meera Jain, founder of Times Evoke and Economic Times (ET) Evoke, 'Tesseract' then embarked on its own journey. It began with the awakening of Sofia (Megan Murray), a researcher in the archives of The Times of India — 'Tesseract' first displays its ingenious brilliance here, blending the legendary TOI archives, brimming with records of humanity over 187 years, with the magic of beginning to understand. For Sofia, her moment in TOI is no less than Gilgamesh starting down his mystical river or Odysseus mounting his ship on a sea of tragic victories — this is the origin of a unique journey, yet one shared by many over millennia.

Times Evoke COGNOSCENTI

As the TOI archives shift shape, melding into mischievous, magical, flying documents, Sofia struggles to keep pace — till she meets a twin. Her consciousness emerges as an interlocuter (Pia Sutaria) and tells her, human truths were gathered over aeons. Astonishing its viewers, 'Tesseract' then takes off — into a world of utter splendour. The two women, traveler and guide, gaze on humanity over the ages, enacted through effervescent song and dance, directed superbly by Shiamak Davar. Tesseract's stunning backgrounds come alive, showing a universe of people who shaped our world — from Leonardo da Vinci's scientific drawings to humanity's first space flight, Charlie Chaplin's penguin-like walk to Audrey Hepburn's swan-like glide, the Buddha to Hitler, Mahatma to Mandela, Marie Curie to Meryl Streep, Louis Pasteur to Led Zeppelin, Shakespeare to Steve Jobs, every legend comes to life, smiling, frowning, searching, finding, thinking, creating.

As these slides, infused with the sheer genius of TOI meeting AI, breathe magic into your mind, Davar's amazing dance troupe sweeps you off your feet. With barely a second between acts, these astonishing performers switch from conveying the meticulous scientific mind to cinema's verve, the toil of sport and the roil of politics, the power of feminism and the pathos of non-human beings in an inhuman world, all in the flash of an eye and the unified movement of feet. These dancers conveyed complex intellectual questions, both as individuals playing a role and a collective, fabulous whole. As they expressed the accomplishments of every age, Sofia and her alter ego stood charmed, inspired, moved, delighted — and finally, terrified.

For, with time, humanity has forsaken its most fundamental rooting. We invent but also eagerly kill. We grow — and scorch. We rebel against injustice — and repeat it. We scale but also shatter. We start seeing life as 'classes', those 'worth keeping' and those fit to wreck. We plunder Earth and wonder as our planet growls back. We build intelligence that compresses all our wisdom into awesome networks — and learns to cooperate far better than us.

Is this it, Sofia tremulously asks? Has our genius, our inventiveness, our desire for power led us to this dark alley with only despair? Is this the ultimate truth — or have we missed something vital?

Share your thoughts at: timesevoke@timesofindia.com
Read Times Evoke online at: www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/times-evoke

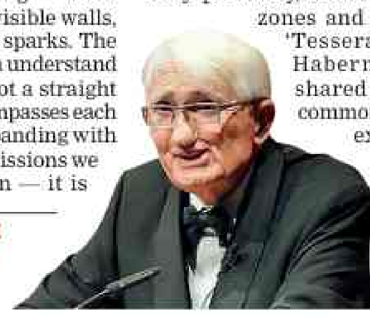
'Tesseract' answers in its extraordinary way, brilliantly using light itself — bars, rays, columns that sway — as a character. There is so much more — there is indeed a cube of awareness in the fourth dimension, beyond our usual powers, that can tell us the secret to life. The stage work in 'Tesseract' is breathtaking — when Sofia touches this cube's invisible walls, they crackle with jewel-like sparks. The fourth dimension helps Sofia understand 'the geometry of truth' is not a straight line. It is a circle which encompasses each one of us, shrinking and expanding with the choices we make, the omissions we choose.Truth is not a given — it is made every minute of our existence. It is catalogued in numerous ways but created by every one of us. 'Truth is power' precisely as there is strength within us to improve life by uniting mind and heart. These are not separate aspects of existence — they are the complete geometry of veritas.

The startling thing about 'Tesseract' — and here, perhaps a female gaze shows with subtle power — is how it explores the quests of the epics but with joy. Just when political crises and planetary meltdowns overwhelm us, 'Tesseract' makes a bold statement — if we use wisdom and warmth together, we can create happiness, the truth of which comes from respecting all life. 'Tesseract' amazed me by answering the world's heaviest questions with the lightest sounds, the nimblest feet and the most joyful smiles.

In today's troubled times, we need a 'Tesseract' school of thought — be true to yourself and others. Be clever — and kind. By abjuring one for the other, you risk falling off reality into a 'post-truth world', a darkness where no art or intellect applies. Why lock yourself in such hell when you were born into a garden — a paradise which exists only on Earth.

As the dazzled audience rose to give 'Tesseract' numerous standing ovations, I thought of the philosopher Jurgen Habermas. He wrote of 'the public sphere', a space where private notions meet collective well-being and forge modern life — in times when we are pushed to imagining we can live best only privately, cloistered in comfort zones and plastic phones, 'Tesseract' highlights Habermas' idea of a shared world creating common good. The truth exists inside that world — seek it with a joyful smile and a song in your heart.

Views are personal



PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS: Habermas on modernity

PANORAMIC: Shiamak Davar's dance troupe brilliantly portrayed art across the ages

LIGHTING UP THE MIND: Sofia and her interlocutor with the role played by stage light

Govt proposes no jail for first-time road safety, pollution violators

Dipak Dash & Sidhartha | TNN

New Delhi: In a reprieve for first-time offenders, govt has proposed to do away with a jail term of up to three months for driving a vehicle violating the prescribed road safety and air and noise pollution norms.

As part of the 784 provisions, across 79 central laws, which are to be amended through the Jan Vishwas Bill, with several related to decriminalisation, govt has proposed that driving a vehicle, violating road safety or air-pollution control norms — which currently attracts up to three months' jail or a fine of Rs 10,000 and six months disqualification to hold driving licence (DL) — will be punishable with a penalty of Rs 10,000 and disqualification for holding DL for three months for the first offence. Subsequent offences will, however, attract up to six months in jail and a penalty of up to Rs 10,000. In the case of noise pollution-related violations, the bill proposes a warning for the first offence, while repeat offence will attract a penalty of up to Rs 10,000.

Similarly, failure to comply with an order or contravening provisions of the Electricity Act or rules, which can currently land a person in jail for three months along with a fine of Rs 1 lakh, is proposed to be converted into a fine of Rs 10,000 to Rs 10 lakh.

Compounding, which is an option for one-time settlement, is sought to be mandated for first instances of power theft or interference with meters or works of licensee and intentionally injuring works.

Further, in a relief to homebuyers, the bill has proposed to remove the existing provision of maximum one-year jail for an allottee who fails to comply with orders from the Real Estate Appellate Tribunal. The penalty for allottees is proposed to be enhanced up to 10% of the cost of the property.

In yet another move to decriminalise unauthorised hawking in trains, govt has proposed to amend a section of the Railways Act to convert up to one year jail and Rs 1,000-2,000 fine to a only penalty of up to Rs 2,000.

Dad jailed for mom's murder, uncles rape UP teen, sell younger sis

Keshav Agarwal | TNN

Pilibhit: Police registered a case against two men for allegedly raping their 17-year-old niece and selling her 16-year-old sister after the girls were left in their care following their mother's murder and their father's imprisonment. According to the complaint filed on Friday evening, one maternal uncle raped the girl while the other stood guard, and the pair later allegedly trafficked the younger sister for money.

In her complaint, the older girl said she and her younger sister had gone to stay at their maternal uncles' home in a village under Barkhera police station during their school summer vacation in June last year. A month later, on July 3, they learnt that their mother had been killed by their father, who was arrested and lodged in jail, leaving the sisters in the care of relatives who, she alleged, later began targeting them.

She added that in Sept, her two uncles took her younger sister away, after which her whereabouts remained unknown. The girl said she later overheard them talking on the phone about a monetary deal and came to fear that they had sold the 16-year-old. After her sister was taken away, the abuse turned directly on her, she said. The girl alleged that early in March this year, while she was asleep, her elder uncle entered her room, forcibly removed her clothes and raped her, while the younger uncle stood guard outside the door.

She said she approached relatives for help in filing a complaint, but found no support, and eventually managed to submit one herself.

Barkhera SHO Pramendra Kumar told TOI that the girl declined a medical examination in writing. "We are now waiting for her court statements for further legal action against the two accused," he said.

83-year-old convict moves SC against 10-yr jail for raping 9-yr-old

Lisa.Monteiro@timesofindia.com

Panaji: An 83-year-old convict has moved Supreme Court, challenging Bombay HC's Jan order that upheld Goa children's court verdict sentencing him to 10-year imprisonment for raping a 9-year-old girl from his neighbourhood in 2012. The case has been listed for consideration in April. The HC had rejected his appeal against the quantum of sentence and his plea to stay it for six weeks, citing the gravity of the offence and evidence presented.

Goa children's court convicted the octogenarian in 2018. The case came to light when the survivor narrated her ordeal to a friend who in turn informed her parents, leading to a prompt complaint. "The survivor in the present case has confided in the child of her age at the available opportunity and which in turn was communicated to her mother who without any loss of time has lodged the complaint...," the court held.

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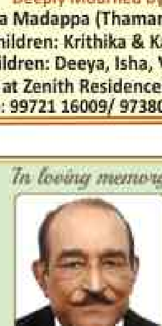
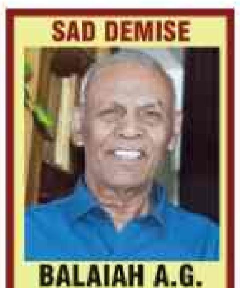
OBITUARY

PARUVANGADA POOVAIAH MADAPPA
Former MD of Karnataka Antibiotics & Pharmaceuticals, Senior Advisor to Karle Group and many other leadership positions throughout the country.
who left for his heavenly abode on 28 Mar 2026,
Funeral: 29 Mar (Hebbal Crematorium 2 PM)
Deeply Mourned by:
Spouse: Aslesha Madappa (Thamane Maneyapanda)
Children: Krithika & Karan
Grandchildren: Deeya, Isha, Vish & Shiv.
Resident at Zenith Residences, Nagavara
Mob: 99721 16009/ 97380 78888

In loving memory

Cyril Vas
October 14, 1933 - March 23, 2026
With profound sadness we announce the passing of Cyril Vas, former bursar and teacher at Bishop Cotton Boys' School, Bangalore. Mr. Vas leaves behind a nearly five decade-long legacy of teaching, and is fondly remembered for his dedication and calm demeanor.
Funeral service will be held at Indiranagar Methodist Church March 31st 2026 at 10am followed by burial at 12:30pm at Hosur Road Indian Christian Cemetery, Gate No 3.
His passing is deeply mourned by his wife Bharathi, children Kiran, Arundathi & Sarvotham, Varun & Sarah, and grandchildren Amogh and Ohana.

OBITUARY
SAD DEMISE

You will always be in our hearts
Charlotte Nirmala Devi
W/O Mr. TV Saravanam
M/O: Mr Vijaya Kumar S & Dr Prasanna Kumar S
Who passed away peacefully on 28th Mar 2026 at 80 years
Foundly remembered by
Family and friends
Funeral service to be held at Pavansar Lutheran Church Cockburn road, at 3pm followed by cremation at Hosur Cemetery Gate 4

SAD DEMISE

BALAIAH A.G.
Retd. Teacher, St. Aloysius School
DoB: 25.07.1939 - DoD: 28.03.2026
Mass on 29th March 2026, 3.00 pm at St. Pius X Church, Kammanahalli, followed by burial at Kallapalli Cemetery, Cox Town.

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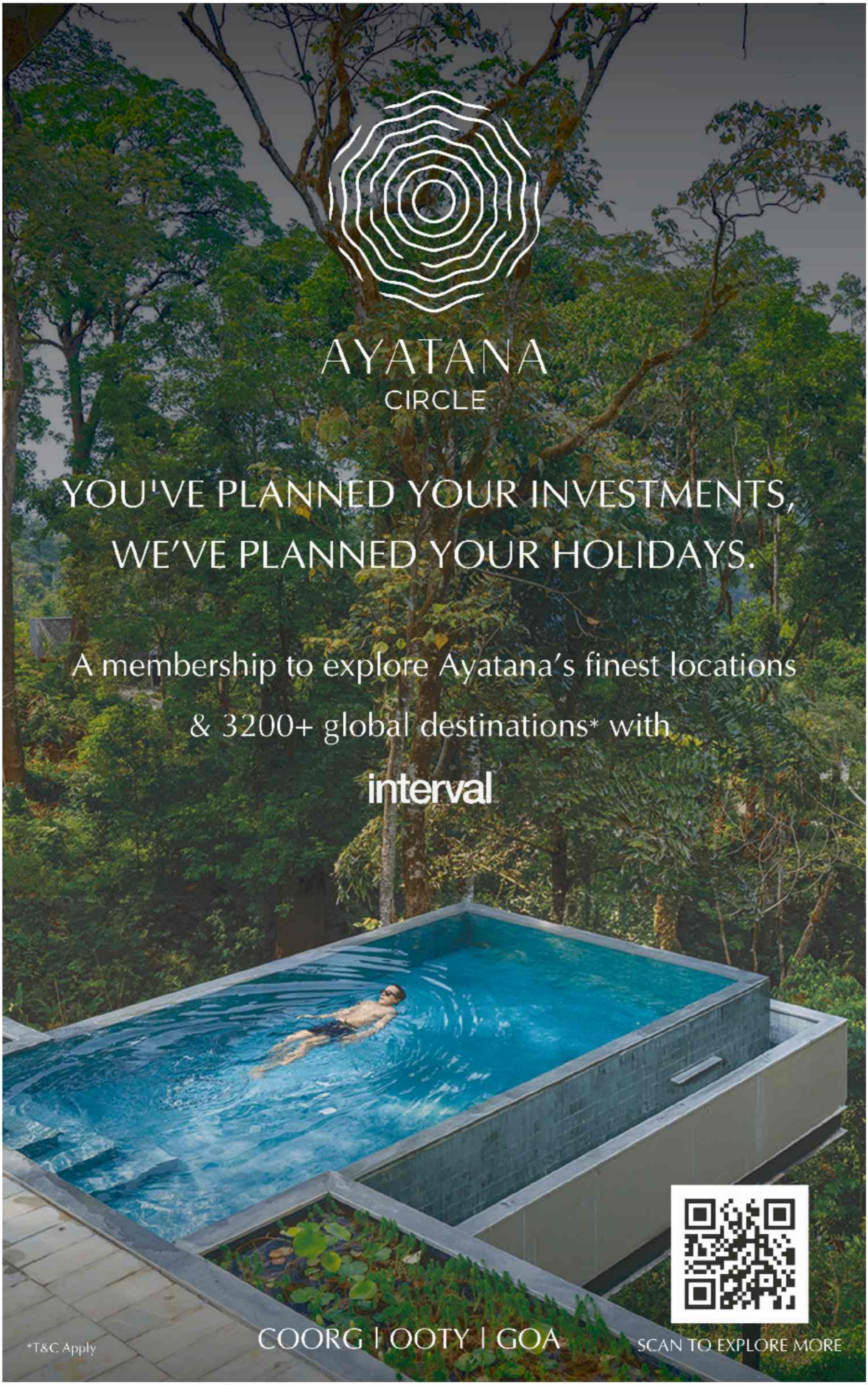
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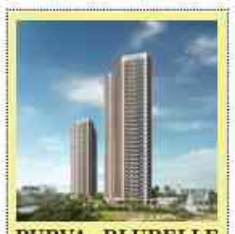

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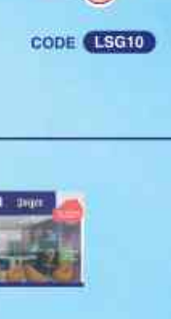

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Congress expels Palakkad councillor over rape charge

Times News Network

Kochi: Congress' Kerala unit expelled Palakkad municipality councillor Prashobh C Valsan from the party on Saturday after a woman belonging to ST accused him of raping her multiple times on the pretext of providing her a stable job and forcing her to terminate the pregnancy.

The survivor has lodged complaints with chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan and police, which filed a complaint on Saturday. Valsan is on the run.

"He may resign as councillor on moral grounds, but that is his decision... Party is also conducting an internal inquiry. We did not receive any formal complaint," Congress' Palakkad district chief A Thankappan said. However, LDF and BJP seized the opportunity to attack Congress, alleging the accused is a close associate of Congress MLA Rahul Mamkootathil.

Centre denies Musk joining Modi-Trump call on W Asia

Productive Conversation: White House

Times News Network

This was Modi and Trump's first conversation since early Feb

New Delhi: Amid reports that billionaire Elon Musk joined the phone call between PM Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump last week, India said on Saturday that the conversation was between the leaders only.

The NYT reported late on Friday that Musk participated in the phone call that Trump made to Modi, calling it 'an unusual appearance by a private citizen on a call between two heads of state during a wartime crisis'.

"We have seen the story. The telephone conversation on March 24 was between PM Modi and President Trump only... it provided the opportunity for exchange of views on the situation in West Asia," said MEA spokesperson, Randhir Jaiswal.

While MEA denied that there was anyone else involved, the White House did not confirm or deny the report. "President Trump has a great relationship with PM Modi, and this was a productive conversation," White House press secretary, Karoline Leavitt, said in a statement to a news agency.

Quoting two anonymous US officials, the NYT report said it was unclear why Musk was on the call or whether he spoke. "His companies have taken on significant investment from sovereign wealth funds in countries in the Middle East, including Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Musk has also long coveted a greater commercial presence in India," it said.

Trump had dialled Modi to discuss the West Asia situation, including the need to secure the Strait of Hormuz. According to an Indian readout, Modi had noted that safe passage of ships through the Strait is vital for global peace, stability and economic well-being.

This was their first conversation since early Feb and came in the middle of reported efforts by Pakistan to host talks between the US and Iran for ending the ongoing military conflict. US ambassador Sergio Gor had said that the president wanted to keep Modi in the loop about developments related to the conflict.

PM, Saudi crown prince agree on need to keep shipping lines open

Times News Network

New Delhi: PM Narendra Modi has spoken to Saudi crown prince and PM **Mohammed bin Salman** and reiterated India's concern about freedom of navigation as the Iran-aligned Houthis entered the theatre of war in West Asia by firing missiles at Israel, raising concern over the transport of Saudi crude through the Red Sea.

"We agreed on the need to ensure freedom of navigation and keep shipping lines secure. Thanked him for his continued support for the welfare of the Indian community in Saudi Arabia," Modi wrote on X after the conversation with the de facto Saudi ruler. Modi also reiterated India's condemnation of attacks on regional energy infrastructure.

The Houthis — a Shiite group who are armed and bankrolled by Iran and have taken control of Yemen — had so far remained on the sidelines of the battle. They have fought against the Saudis and, in 2023, as part of the conflict, blocked the strategically important Bab el-Mandab Strait — a narrow passage that carries a significant share of global energy and cargo flows. At a time when risks persist around the Strait of Hormuz, any disruption at Bab el-Mandeb could further strain already sensitive supply chains.

This was the second telephonic conversation between the PM and the crown prince since the West Asia conflict started on Feb 28.

Underscoring India's energy and diaspora interests in the Gulf, Modi has twice spoken to leaders of all GCC countries since the conflict started and condemned the violation of their sovereignty and territorial integrity. India, however, is yet to condemn the US-Israel strikes on Iran.

In his conversations, Modi has also repeatedly called for keeping the Strait of Hormuz — which Iran continues to control — open to ensure global energy security is not adversely impacted.

2 more India-bound tankers cross Hormuz

Two more India-bound LPG tankers, carrying around 93,000 tonnes of cooking gas, navigated through the Strait of Hormuz on Saturday, ship-tracking data on the MarineTraffic platform revealed. This comes two days after Iranian foreign minister Abbas Araghchi said India is among the five "friendly nations" whose ships would be allowed safe passage, reports **Dipak Dash**.

News agency Bloomberg said throughout the transit, the two ships used their transponders to signal they had Indian ownership and Indian crew, which has become a standard security measure.

So far four Indian-flagged ships — Jag Vasant, Pine Gas, Shivalik and Nanda Devi — have transited the Strait.

Freezing bank account without cause violates fundamental rights: HC

Pinto.Deepak@timesofindia.com

Hyderabad: The Telangana high court held that freezing a citizen's bank account — in the absence of cogent reasons and without even a prima facie nexus between the account and a cognizable offence — constitutes a grave and unwarranted violation of the fundamental rights of trade and business, as well as livelihood.

Justice EV Venugopal further ruled that a mechanical and arbitrary freezing order directly impinges upon the right to life and personal liberty of the account holder under Article 21 and the freedom to carry on trade, occupation, and business under Article 19(1)(g). The court directed that the account be restored immediately.

Justice Venugopal passed the directions recently while disposing of a petition filed by Khammam-based restaurant and bar, The Bottle, whose account in a private bank was frozen on the instructions of the cybercrime wing of Etawah district, Uttar Pradesh.

Not named in FIR

The bar owner, Kandibanda Sridhar, stated in his petition that his account was frozen in connection with a probe into a crime with which he was neither connected. He said his name did not figure in the FIR and that no notice was issued to him. The petitioner submitted that the action was not reported to the jurisdictional magistrate and, that, there was no response to his representation to his bank asking to restore his account.

The judge noted that although only a certain amount was under dispute, the entire account was frozen, leaving the petitioner unable to operate it or access the funds.

Delivery agent flees with 30 LPG cylinders amid fuel crisis

Times News Network

Visakhapatnam: Desperate times call for desperate measures, but a thieving LPG delivery agent in Vizag may have gone too far amid the current fuel crisis.

At a time when Vizag city is faced with a long waiting list of cooking gas cylinders, Appa Rao, a delivery agent, decamped with nearly 30 LPG cylinders which were to be delivered to residents of Chintagantyada in Gajuwaka mandal, police said.

He likely sold these domestic LPG cylinders in black for a premium, taking advantage of the high demand, police said.

Sniffing opportunity amid the crisis, he collected OTPs and empty gas cylinders from customers, assuring them of delivering refilled ones in a couple of days. A month on, these customers have still not received their LPG cylinders.

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I, Rashmi Aravinda W/O Aravind Shidakapla Gurupadappa born on 08-Jul-1979 residing at Shree Nele, DN-160, 1st Mn, 4th Crs, Shivananda Nagar, New Thippasandra Post, Bengaluru-570075, have changed my name to Rashmi Aravind vide affidavit sworn before Notary S A Chachadi 8307 dated 28-Mar-2026 at Belagavi

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MUMBAI based Jain vegetarian family seeks alliance for son 34 years, 5'11", Masters from Carnegie Melon, working abroad, well travelled and well read, having good perspective of different cultures and countries, having healthy and active life, competing in martial arts. Looking for bride in 25-29 age bracket, masters from good school, having good relationship with parents and siblings, has lived by herself, healthy living with sports or any physical activity, vegetarian or vegan. Cast, religion and race no bar. Contact: lokendrachandra@gmail.com

B.TECH Computer Science/ MS Data Science boy, working for Pune MNC, Jan 1999/ 6ft, father MNC IT professional and mother Chartered Accountant. Contact on email ID talktosnb@gmail.com

MCA+MBA, Punjabi-Hindu, 41/5'8 never married, Wkg in BLR MNC 45 LPA. Seeks non-manglik educated girl. #9810157842

ALLIANCE invited for Mr.Vinay Murthy, BE, 37 Yrs, Self Employed, S/o.T D Murthy, Retd Sr.Exe, BHEL, Bhopal. Looking for a suitable bride. Caste and Religion No bar. Contact:9425604412

PQM for Pb Khatri NM boy Dec91/5'6" 7.5LPA MBA Working Admin Gurgaon. Caste no bar. #9899242416, lakshayahuja05@gmail.com

ESTD:1998 For Elite profiles both India/ abroad, 1st/ 2nd/ Late marriages (personalised services). CT Ushodhaya on 9611919477/ 9886884291

SM for NRI (SC) boy/ 40/ 5'11"/ S/w engg/ separated/ soft & family oriented Parents retd. govt ser. Priority for Hindi belt. Caste no bar. M 9696211153

BRIDE WANTED
US-based Punjabi Entrepreneur, 29 yrs (June 1996 born), 5'11", fair, well-settled Business Owner, living in Pennsylvania, USA. Seeking well-educated, professionally qualified working girl (Medicine/IT preferred), family-oriented with modern outlook. Caste no bar for suitable match. "Preference for a South Indian girl." contact : rm15090@yahoo.com
WhatsApp: +1-412-491-2163

ASSAMESE Hindu Boy 38 yrs, MCA wkg with Top MNC abroad looking for an edu Assamese girl.Caste No Bar +919864372798, +919957148710

PQM for B.TECH (comp) never married boy Sept 95/6'1 Wkg MNC Pune. Seeks for btful wkg girl. WhatsApp # +91 83198 77721

COSMOPOLITAN

Beautiful,Slim 5'4"+ Vegetarian Hindu Upper Caste match for 5'8",Sept.1997 born MP Cadre IPS.IAS,PG Doctor,Professor Preferred.Contact:9770222646,8269997879

PQ b'ful girl for Delhi based H'some 36 yrs/6ft Engineering from BITS Pilani MBA-IIM (A), wkg in Top Consultancy MNC, 1Cr+ p.a. Never married boy of Well Edu. & Status Punjabi family. Call/W'app 8796829405

BY NATIONALITY

NRI/ GREEN CARD

UP Br 38/ 6'2" MBA, BE Sr VP, US MNC London, UK citizen, nev/m, n'mglk boy seeks tall PQ upper caste girl employed/ employable in London. WhatsApp Call : 9717500885

High Status Educated Business/ Professional Agarwal-well known Sr. Advocate / High Court Judge Family of **Delhi / London, Networth Multi-Crore staying in own Independent Houses in South Delhi/London,** Seeking Match for Exceptionally **H'Some 34Yrs. / 6'1" Lawyer Son** (LL.M London), **Running Reputed Commercial-International Law Firm** well settled in Delhi **and Very B'Ful, Slim Daughter 38 Yrs. 5'4" / British Lawyer Partner with leading US Law Firm in London.**
(Caste no bar)
WhatsApp: 8826819445
agarwal6362@gmail.com

BY CASTE

BRAHMIN

1995 Kritika Koushika IYER 5'3" Masters Communications Associate US Citizen Expecting Groom with clean habits Ct : +1(732) 850 0135

1995 Kritika Koushika IYER 5'2" Bachelors Human Resource, Business Partner US Citizen Expecting Groom with clean habits Ct +1(732) 822 1892

BEAUTIFUL vegetarian, 27, 163cm, cultured, well-educated professional (Master's). Seeks compatible groom. Community no bar. Call/WA 9345 634 365

WELL Settled Match for Brahmin, 39/5'1", Divorced, Beautiful, 70 LPA Bangalore (Jaipur Family). Upper Caste No Bar Send BHP 8949222130

B'FUL GB 1990/5'3" ph.D Bio chem,researcherin K.T.H Uni sweden Pref. br. w'qlfd stld or willing stld in Scandinavion /europe countries 9602744455

PG Doctor/ IITIAN/ UPSC for Beautiful Brahmin 34/ 5'4" Asst professor AIIMS doctor family 7091527011

ALLIANCE from Agarwal / Bania, US Citizens, Professionals / Business Man / Doctors for well qualified 40 year old Agarwal girl, 5'3", family oriented, fair complexion, US Citizen, working in N J, well established family. Preferred vegetarian & Non drinker. Share profile with latest picture at urwelcome163@aol.com

MBA, B'ful with modern out-look Aggarwal daughter May '86/5'5"/ Wrkg as Sr. Communication specialist in Delhi, both parents CAs. Seek Prof . Qlfd. well sttld never married groom from a reputed family, caste no bar. Send complete BHP to 9811036513, Email: caashokgupta@yahoo.co.in

JAT

MBA BTech girl Sep 86/5'3 Job Bank Canada PR, US Green card, Father Doctor Delhi seeks Prof Qual boy-9818617806, aadi.rajyan@gmail.com

OTHER PROFESSIONALS

AFFLUENT Ezhava girl 28 yrs with MBA working in Bangalore looking for professionally qualified groom Call : 85476 32446.

BY RELIGION

HINDU

ENGINEER post graduate HRD propertied in Bangalore beautiful young looking homely 1983-5'5" Hindu Balija Naidu single mother with daughter seeks suitable alliance contact 9444161790, 94442 72432

TRAINEE psychologist 81born divorcee 1son15 beaurucratic status family looking for well placed match Contact 9413340907

SHRIVASTAVA Girl 19-03-89 (9:50 AM) /5'6 SAP Bangalore 43LPA. Family from Bhopal, MP Looking for suitable boy Contact: 9425149643, 9424467288

BE (CS), MBA, wkg MNC,36/5'4",kannadiga Rajaka Seeks well-settled, Blr-based, prof. groom from affluent family #8431966381

SC BTech Girl June 95, 5 Ft, Vegan working in IT (Software) Hyd 24 LPA looking for a suitable groom from IT & wants to be childfree. WA 7842979955

GIRL B.E(ECE), 23/5'4", Wkg prof., Bangalore. Seeks VP-Lingayat BE/IIT/MBBS prof., well-settled groom, 24-28. M: 9084511881/9353083079

BEAUTIFUL, 26yrs, 5'8" Engg, MBA(IIM). Req Tall, Handsome, professional, Affluent fly, settled in Hyd / Blr. / Mumbai. Ph: 9880754481

PQM4 sriv grl, Nvr marrd, 85 Born 5'5".Curr Pursng Ph.D Avadh Univ & also wrkng. Upper caste & Dvrce without a child invtd.9389349500,9793440260

SEEKING a suitable match for daughter (1995), working with MNC in Mumbai. Looking for well-educated groom, with Master's degree, aged 31-36. contact: 9425125199.

HINDU LINGAYAT telugu 28/172/B Tech computers Top NIT(2014-2018)/software job with 15 LPA (2018-2021) prepared for UPSC (2021-2026) up to interview not selected / want to persue career again /present passive income 21lpa (through properties and investments) both parents gazetted officers/ seeks central/state/psu officers/PG doctors/ highly placed private sector/soft ware employees caste language and location no bar 9505063063

KAYASTHA, May 92 Non Manglik Girl, attractive 5'3", MA BEd teaching senior classes Diabetic, Reputed family contact : 9760812525

SEEKING Compatible Well Settled Businessman for a Charming, Very Fair, B'ful Well educated Girl, June 1986, 5'3" Caste No bar #9650002649

Looking for GROOM

Bangalore based Bengali, fair girl, slim/1985/150 cm, PhD/IIT, University Asstt. Professor in Bangalore. Parents seek liberal minded suitable Bengali match.

Send Bio/Photo to "matrias2026@gmail.com"

PUNJABI

LOOKING for professional, slim,tall boy for a smart, good looking, 5'.5", Dec 94, punjabi girl, working in BLR. Call or whatsapp biodata: 9849640921

SM4 B'ful, well-edu. Pjbi girl, 27/5'1". Runs own B'ness From repu. Pjbi b'ness fmly, Delhi. Seeks Pjbi b'ness class fmly # 9810075108

TAMIL

B.E., MBA., 28/6'1 MNC Bangalore Saiva Vellalar Brahmin Veg Girl seeks suitable alliance Ph 9841535955

COSMOPOLITAN

LONDON based Fair Smart Conv Edu 39/5'3" BE, MBA(LBS), Sr.Consultant top MNC. Highly edu fmly from Bihar/UP. email: spriyadarshee@gmail.com . Phone:+91 9445021180.

BENGALI, 5'3"/1989, Assistant Professor of Economics in a renowned Atlanta college seeks alliance from liberal, educated men, settled in the US, preferably in Atlanta or nearby. +91 98314 37792

BY NATIONALITY

NRI/ GREEN CARD

✔ **BS** Comp Engg from USA, Feb 90/5'2" Punjabi Gupta girl, Wkg Int Org Toronto, seeks PQ boy in USA/ India/ Canada. Contact 9899105601

ONLY USA based Br boy for Br b'ful girl 1993/5'2",BTech,MS -N.Corolina,wkg S/W DevOps, Rhode Island.Fathr retd Depty Excise Comm'r. M : 9286759693

RAJPUT girl, NRI (Poland) Slim fair 31 Yrs, 5'5" MBA working in MNC, Seeks suitable Match, Father NRI Retired MNC, Call 9821203504

Soulmate Premium

WANTED BRIDE

Name: **Arjun Dhumne**
Age: **23**
Place of Birth: **Washington DC**
Religion: **Hindu**
Languages: **English, Marathi, Hindi**
Education: **Bachelor of Science in Finance**
Height: **5'8"**

Arjun Dhumne, raised in Northern Virginia by Maharashtrian parents, grew up balancing strong Indian values with an American upbringing.

Looking for a life partner whom I can build a legacy with

He attended the University of Southern California and now works in investment banking in New York. His role often brings him to India, and he is open to relocating here after marriage.

To Arjun, marriage is a partnership that evolves over time. Inspired by his parents' arranged marriage—where love grew into a shared story and legacy—he hopes to build something equally meaningful with his partner.

Family plays a central role in his life. He believes that being close to a partner's family truly matters and values forming genuine relationships with them.

He is drawn to someone who is well-educated, ambitious, and deeply rooted in family values. While born and raised in America, he considers himself Indian at heart and hopes to find someone open-minded, curious, and eager to build a life together. For him, education is important, but so is a desire to give back—recognizing that a strong partnership is built over time, not found perfectly.

He sees marriage as equal, though not always in a strict 50-50 sense—believing balance comes from supporting each other in different ways.

Looking ahead, he envisions a family with two or three children, appreciating the warmth and energy of a larger, close-knit family.

This or that?
Mountains or Beaches: **Beaches**
Tea or Coffee: **Tea**
House parties or Clubbing: **House parties**
Movies or Books: **Movies**
Joint family or nuclear family: **Nuclear family**

Looking for...
A well-educated and ambitious girl who is deeply connected to her family. Open to trying new things and wants to build a life together.

Interested in knowing Arjun better? Write to him at arjundhumne011@gmail.com

SECOND MARRIAGE

SUCCESSFUL 37, highly-educated (Harvard), outgoing professional. Cultured family. Seeks compatible bride. Caste no bar. Call/WA 9345 634 365

RELIGION NO BAR

38/5'9" Unmarried Boy Caste No Bar Btech-MBA IIM, Working MNC 40LPA Business family Accept Div & Widow. 9407932961,7587736854

BY LANGUAGE

BENGALI

BENGALI CA boy , Sept'81/ 5'8", Wkg in MNC Bank London, UK citizen, seeks Prof Qual wrking girl, min 5'3", within 40, +91-8904823096, subjaya2026@gmail.com .

MALAYALI

REQ qualified working girl for 33 yr Nair Boy 5'8"/ 68 Kg based in Mumbai, CA & MBA working in a Big 4 consulting firm, from same community. Mob 9820102301

PUNJABI

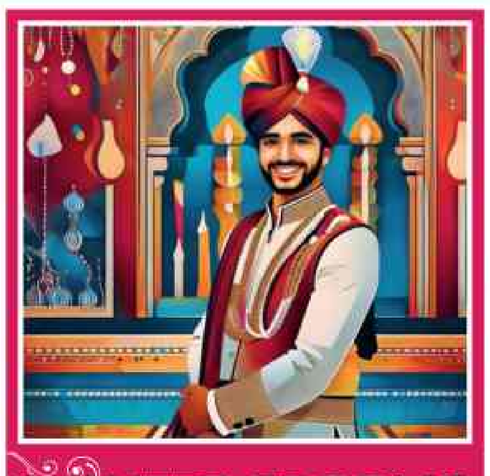
SM4, Khatri, 21.5.95 / 11:07 PM/5'2", MSc (HM) Pusa, Sales/Mktg Mngr MNC B'lore, 15 LPA. Seeks edu. wkg bride. GGN based family. 9810975210

Professionally Qlfd Working Match for
B.Tech (Toronto), MBA, Punjabi Khatri only son 32/ 6'1" Manglik, Wrkg. Senior Mgmt. ED Tech Gurgaon, Well Settled, Edu. Gurgaon based broad-minded family
Send details W'App/ Call 9999788949

PUNJABI Khatri Boy 34 yrs 175 cms BE working in L&T chennai, earning 45 LPA looking for punjabi/hindi bride. Whatsapp 9380715230

TELUGU

SEEKING BRIDE FOR MD-DOCTOR,35,REDDY,AFFLUENT FAMILY, REQ:27-33,DOCTOR/IIT/NIT/BITS.CON:7396279292,8639232860



WANTED GROOMS

WANTED GROOMS

BY CASTE

BRAHMIN

Brahmin, B.Tech, b. 1997, North Indian, beautiful girl, 5'6", working in Bangalore. Seeks prof qual Brahmin groom (pref Software). Ph No: 9414391911

SEEKING Alliance [preferably from Bglr / metro cities] for Br. Daughter , BE IT Nov-83 , settled & working at Senior Tech Post - Bangalore USA MNC 60 LPA. Ph:- +91-9327325444 / Mail : tkn1944@gmail.com

AFFLUENT Tyagi Brahmin industrialist family invites alliance for their accomplished and good-looking daughter, born in 1993, height 5'4", well-educated (MBA; CFA Level I cleared). Seeking suitable match from Govt Class I Officer or reputed industrialist family. Em: director@nicholas.co.in Contact: 9795922999

1997, Iyer Vadama Pooradam, Gauthama M.Com, MBA, CIBC Bank, Toronto, Canada 5'5" & 57Kg. Seeks Handsome,Caring, Loving groom. ct : 9820870602

JAIN

JAIN, slim, fair & beautiful girl (1996, 5'6"), Software Engineer in MNC (60 LPA, Bangalore) seeks qualified, vegetarian match. Tel: 9313573094

KAYASTHA

BHATNAGAR April 96, Non manglik, graduate Xavier's, journalism ACJ Chennai Working in leading channel, Mumbai. Father retd Army officer. Seeks well settled boy only from Mumbai 9752523699

DESIGN prof wkg in IT MNC Mumbai 28LPA 29/5'2" Girl.Father IRS (Retd) seeks highly Qual/Prof kayastha boy WhatsApp 7208706366

TAMIL IYER

BHARADWAJAM Chithirai Thulam.Age 33,Bcom CFA part 2. US MNC Bank Chennai 80000 pm only child own house. Mother only alive. 99414 66140

BY COMMUNITY

AGARWAL

SINGHAL Noida based girl b'ful slim brilliant LLM (NLU Jodhpur)wrkg social auditor Mar'98/5'5". Highly qlfd fmly of CAs & Drs. seeks well sttld Agarwal boy.W'ap: 9837126640

PQM4 35/164,slim,fair Garg girl, B.Tech(UPTU),MBA (Germany).wkg-sr.position leading Auto MNC Berlin (Germany) fthr rtd.PSU ofcr.Wt-9811924494

RAJPUT

27/5'4" B'FL Fair LLB girl in top MNC Delhi Fthr Sr Civil Servt GOI Sks H'sm Rajput Boy Civil serv/Cls 1/IIT/IIM/corporate. 9971121316,9873434790

BY PROFESSION

DOCTORS

MD/MS BRAHMIN M4 MBBS, MS OPTHALMOLOGY GARHWALI BRAHMIN GIRL 1995/5'3" FROM A DOCTOR'S FAMILY 9411536600 7983038968

DOCTOR (MD, DM) Bengali, fair girl, 5'3" /1992, wkg in pvt hosp in Bangalore, seeks qualified groom preferably doctor, Ph: 8850348047

KAYASTH 17.4.96, 5'6" NM MBBS, MS, Persuing M.ch in Plastic Surgery 11.50Lpa Seeks w'sttld Dr Prefd. Uppr cast no bar. 9425081375,9424054010

Looking for GROOM

Bangalore based Beautiful divorcee Bengali girl, height 5'3" age 31working as a Pilot in Airline as captain

Email at: Suchato2002@yahoo.com

Call /message on 8527014778

MUSLIM

PQM4 Sunni Syed, U. P. Girl, good looking, 1998born, 163cm, Grad, wrkg for an MNC at Bangalore, 6Lplus, from Syed/Shaikh boys from U. P. Wrkg at Bangalore. Send full biodata at shhrizwi53@yahoo.com .

MBBS, MD, SUNNI, ANSARI girl,27/5', from reputed medico family, Aligarh. Reqd. well settled Sunni MD/MS doctor groom. +91-6398087486

SIKH

REQUIRED Sikh smart boy (Job/ Business) for a sikh postgraduate working girl Age 30, 5'3", Father well settled in Ahmedabad. Mo. 9824022325

GENERAL

CASTE NO BAR

SAINI, wanted suitable groom for a mangalik beautiful, well-educated girl (DOB 1999), fair, 5' 2" postgraduate , belonging to a respectable family. Working as a voice calling officer in a private bank at Noida. Groom should be well-settled, educated, non-smoker, teetotaler and from a good family background. Preference for professionals working in government / private sector. Caste no bar for suitable match. Interested families may contact: 8076176864, 9013766752

SECOND MARRIAGE

SM4 Prof. qlfd, working as Proj. Mngr., Jain, Divorced girl, 42/160cm. E-matrijain14@gmail.com, Mob-8679660603 ,7983121603

BY LANGUAGE

BENGALI

WELL-SETTLED Alliance for Chandigarh based Bengali Girl Pastry Chef, 94 born, 5'4". Business Family from Chandigarh.Bengalis & Non-Bengalis (Upper Cast only). Contact Phone: 8284854506

EB Bengali Kayastha fair slim bful 32/5'2"MSc Xaviers wkg MNC Bangalore parents South Kolkata seeks PG well settled Bengali groom from educated family. ph 8889269990

SM4 Bengali Rajbanshi 30 MBBS doing MD (Anaes). Delhi based parents. Caste no bar. 7003080000 prashyish@gmail.com

SM4 Mumbai 1992 born 5'5" Slim fair B'ful Bengali Brahmin girl, Working in National Carrier (Airlines) at Delhi (Non Veg)Call: 9769685822

SM4 Bengali Rajbanshi 30 MBBS doing MD (Anaes). Delhi based parents. Caste no bar. 7003080000 prashyish@gmail.com

An Elite Industrialist family of Delhi seeking alliance for their 28/5'1, Ivy League educated, beautiful, cultured, smart daughter based in US. Looking for well educated, cosmopolitan, well settled, progressive boy from respected affluent family.
Contact 9811109134
Or Mail Us At shinegroom01@gmail.com

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ELITE BRIDES WANTED

BRAHMIN IYER, 28, 183 cms, Entrepreneur, Masters in Management. Lives in Thrissur. Father is a Businessman. Family is financially well off. Looking for an amiable match. Contact: 6366530296

VOKKALIGA, 30, 180 cms, Entrepreneur, Masters. Lives in Bangalore. Father is a Businessman. Family is financially well off. Looking for an amiable match. Contact: 6366530296

NAYAK, 30, 173 cms, Doctor, Pursuing DM. Lives in Mysore. Parents are Doctors. Family is financially well off. Looking for a like minded match. Contact: 6366530296

MADHWA, 45, 165 cms, Divorced, Entrepreneur, Masters in Management. Lives in USA. Family is financially well off and lives in Bangalore. Looking for a like minded match. Contact: 6366530296

ELITE GROOMS WANTED

REDDY, 27, 160 cms, Software Professional, Bachelor's from a reputed institute. Lives in Bangalore. Father is a Businessman. Family settled in Bangalore. Looking for a well-settled match. Contact: 6366530296

BALIJA NAIDU, 28, 158 cms, Doctor, Masters in Medicine. Lives in Bangalore. Father is a Businessman. Family is financially well off. Looking for a like minded match. Contact: 6366530296

VOKKALIGA, 25, 165 cms, Software Professional, Bachelors in Engg. Lives in Bangalore. Family is affluent and lives in Bangalore. Looking for a like minded match. Contact: 6366530296

BRAHMIN, 33, 168 cms, Masters. Lives in Dubai. Father is a Consultant. Family is financially well off and lives in Bangalore. Looking for an amiable match. Contact: 6366530296

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MOHALI RISES AS INDIA'S INVESTMENT POWERHOUSE WITH TECH, INFRASTRUCTURE AND POLICY PUSH

BACKED BY POLICY REFORMS, INFRASTRUCTURE EXPANSION AND A RISING TECH ECOSYSTEM, MOHALI IS FAST EMERGING AS A PREFERRED INVESTMENT DESTINATION

As Punjab continues to build on the "Brand Mohali" narrative, the city's transformation into a hub for innovation, enterprise and quality living appears not only plausible but increasingly inevitable. Under the leadership of Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann, Punjab has embarked on an ambitious transformation of Mohali, positioning it as a future-ready urban and investment hub within the Tricity region. The government's focus on infrastructure, ease of doing business and sectoral diversification is steadily reshaping Mohali into one of India's most promising growth centres. This vision was prominently showcased at the recently concluded Progressive Punjab Investors' Summit 2026, where "Brand Mohali" was positioned as North India's emerging hub for artificial intelligence, IT, and next-generation industries. The dedicated session during PPIS 2026 highlighted Mohali's transition from an agrarian base to a technology-led ecosystem, anchored by projects such as the 182-acre Expo City and India's first dedicated AI Tower.

A FAST-GROWING URBAN ECONOMY WITH STRONG FUNDAMENTALS

Mohali today ranks among the top five fastest-growing urban economies in India, with an estimated gross district domestic product growth of around 10 percent over the past decade. Its economic profile is increasingly diversified, spanning IT and IT-enabled services, biotechnology, advanced manufacturing, electronics system design and emerging service industries. The city benefits from its strategic location within the Tricity cluster of Mohali, Chandigarh and Panchkula, which together serve a catchment of over 60 million people across Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir. This provides a strong consumption base, talent pool and demand ecosystem for businesses.

IT, GCCs AND STARTUPS DRIVE THE GROWTH ENGINE

A key driver of Mohali's investment appeal is its rapidly expanding technology ecosystem. The city hosts more than 4,000 active startups and has evolved into a growing hub for Global Capability Centres and IT firms. Major companies such as Infosys, Tech Mahindra and Zscaler have established a strong presence, supported by a workforce of 50,000 to 60,000 professionals, including nearly 35,000 IT specialists. The presence of the Semiconductor Laboratory, India's only integrated semiconductor device manufacturing facility, further strengthens its position in the electronics and semiconductor ecosystem. Investment momentum is also visible in capital inflows, with more than ₹7,500 crore already invested in IT and electronics system design and manufacturing in the region. The pipeline remains robust, with projections indicating a doubling of IT and GCC jobs to over 1.1 lakh by 2030, driving demand for 10 to 12 million square feet of commercial office space.

COMPETITIVE COST ADVANTAGE ENHANCES INVESTOR APPEAL

One of Mohali's most compelling advantages is its cost competitiveness compared to tier-1 cities. Land and real estate costs are 20 to 25 percent lower than in major urban centres, while commercial rentals are up to 50 percent cheaper than markets such as Delhi NCR and Bengaluru. Operational costs also remain attractive, with electricity tariffs around ₹6 per kWh and overall salary and living costs significantly lower than leading metros. This cost efficiency, combined with lower attrition rates, makes Mohali a preferred destination for companies looking to optimise operating expenses without compromising on talent quality.

> *Punjab is witnessing a turnaround in its industrial sector, with investors returning to the state. The recent success of the Progressive Punjab Investors' Summit is a testament to this trend. The Punjab government is transforming Mohali into a world-class IT hub through cutting-edge landscaping and urban beautification, aiming to create a globally competitive and visually stunning urban environment."*
>
> **— Bhagwant Singh Mann**
> *Chief Minister, Punjab*

INSIDE MOHALI'S GROWTH STORY

- Mohali is among the top **5 fastest-growing urban** economies in India
- Over **4,000 active** startups driving innovation
- **₹7,500 crore+ investment** in IT and ESDM sectors
- **50,000 to 60,000** professionals in IT and the GCC ecosystem
- Projected **2X growth** in tech jobs by 2030
- **10–12 million sq ft** office demand in the next five years
- **20–50 percent** lower operational costs vs tier-1 cities
- Approval timelines reduced to **30–45 days**
- **4.5 million** annual air passengers with strong growth
- **150+ registered IT units**
- **40,000+ graduates** annually ensuring talent supply
- **45 million sq ft** housing stock with high absorption rates

PICS AND DATA BY DIPR, PUNJAB

INFOSYS' ₹290 CRORE CAMPUS IN MOHALI TO CREATE 7000 JOBS

Under this project, an integrated campus will be established in the first phase, which will include a software development block, food court and other facilities.

EASE OF DOING BUSINESS

Policy reforms have played a critical role in strengthening investor confidence. The Unified Single Window System introduced by the Punjab government has streamlined regulatory approvals across more than 23 departments, reducing project approval timelines from over 100 days to 30 to 45 days. The system also provides dedicated relationship managers and digital approval mechanisms, ensuring faster clearances and improved transparency. These measures have significantly enhanced the ease of doing business across the Tricity region.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND CONNECTIVITY GROWTH

Mohali's infrastructure backbone is another key differentiator. The city enjoys robust connectivity through national highways, rail networks and an international airport handling over 4.5 million passengers annually, with double-digit growth in traffic. It is also supported by strong digital infrastructure, including high-speed fibre networks and data centres, enabling seamless operations for technology and data-driven enterprises. Its proximity to major cities such as Delhi, Jaipur and Amritsar further enhances its strategic importance as a business hub.

A LIVABLE CITY ATTRACTING TALENT AND CAPITAL

Mohali's high quality of life is a significant pull factor for both investors and talent. With over 40 percent green cover, superior urban planning and better air quality than many Indian cities, the region offers a balanced lifestyle. The Tricity also has strong healthcare and education ecosystems, including premier institutions and over 40,000 graduates entering the workforce annually.

MOHALI'S COMPETITIVE EDGE

- Mohali is a high-productivity city powered by new-age (AI/IT) and traditional industry cluster blends, startups and knowledge institutions
- Renowned for being the national education capital with elite schools, universities, and research institutions

DIVERSE ECONOMIC BASE
- IT/ITeS, biotech, med-tech, ESDM and advanced manufacturing, services & government

BUSINESS STABILITY
- Low attrition, lower operational cost than tier-1s & single window approvals

CONNECTIVITY HUB
- Robust national & global connectivity via NH, rail and air, supported by high-speed fibre & reliable DC2 infrastructure

STARTUP & INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM
- Incubators & accelerators (STPI, NIPER), tech parks (Bestech, Quark City, NetSmartz), Biotech hubs (NABI)

LOW ELECTRICITY & POWER COSTS
- Mohali electricity cost is ~₹6/kWh, which is cheaper than Haryana, Maharashtra & Telangana (range of ₹6.5-9/kWh)

IMC Rajpura-Patiala powering Punjab's industrial progress with innovation-led growth

POSITIONED AS A FUTURE-READY INDUSTRIAL ECOSYSTEM, IMC RAJPURA-PATIALA REFLECTS A CALIBRATED EFFORT TO ATTRACT LARGE-SCALE INVESTMENTS, FOSTER INNOVATION AND GENERATE EMPLOYMENT ACROSS SECTORS

Punjab's industrial vision is taking concrete shape at the Integrated Manufacturing Cluster at Rajpura-Patiala, which is fast emerging as a high-potential hub for industry and innovation. Backed by strategic location, robust infrastructure upgradation and strong policy support, the project reflects the Bhagwant Singh Mann government's focused push over the past four years to accelerate industrial growth in the state. Positioned as a future-ready industrial ecosystem, IMC Rajpura-Patiala marks a shift from fragmented industrial expansion to a more integrated and infrastructure-led development model. The approach aligns with India's broader ambition of strengthening domestic manufacturing and building globally competitive industrial hubs.

A STRATEGIC NODE IN INDIA'S INDUSTRIAL CORRIDOR NETWORK

The Rajpura-Patiala Integrated Manufacturing Cluster is a key greenfield project under the Amritsar-Kolkata Industrial Corridor (AKIC) and the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme. It is among the first nodes to be taken up for development under the corridor, underscoring its strategic importance in catalysing industrialisation across the region.

The project is being implemented by the National Industrial Corridor Development and Implementation Trust through its joint venture company, the National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation, in partnership with the Government of Punjab. This institutional framework ensures coordinated planning and execution, in line with global standards for industrial infrastructure.

Spread across a total project area of 1,099 acres, IMC Rajpura-Patiala has been carefully planned to balance industrial activity with sustainability and urban infrastructure. Around 59 percent of the land has been earmarked for industrial use, while 1.67 percent is allocated for commercial development and nearly 16 percent is reserved for green spaces and water bodies.

SCALE MEETS STRATEGY: IMC RAJPURA DRIVES INDUSTRIAL PROGRESS

- The IMC Rajpura-Patiala is one of the first developments to kick-start the development for overall 7 nodes under AKIC
- Large integrated manufacturing cluster with multi-sector industrial focus
- 59% of the area of IMC Rajpura-Patiala has been earmarked for industrial development
- Strategically located with strong road and rail connectivity
- Designed as a plug-and-play industrial ecosystem

INFRASTRUCTURE-LED DEVELOPMENT WITH PLUG-AND-PLAY ADVANTAGE

A defining feature of IMC Rajpura-Patiala is its focus on world-class trunk infrastructure. The development includes internal road networks, water supply systems, drainage and sewerage networks, power distribution infrastructure and other essential utilities required for industrial operations.

This plug-and-play model reduces entry barriers for investors and enables faster project execution. Unlike traditional industrial estates, the cluster integrates industrial, logistics and support infrastructure within a single ecosystem, ensuring operational efficiency and scalability.

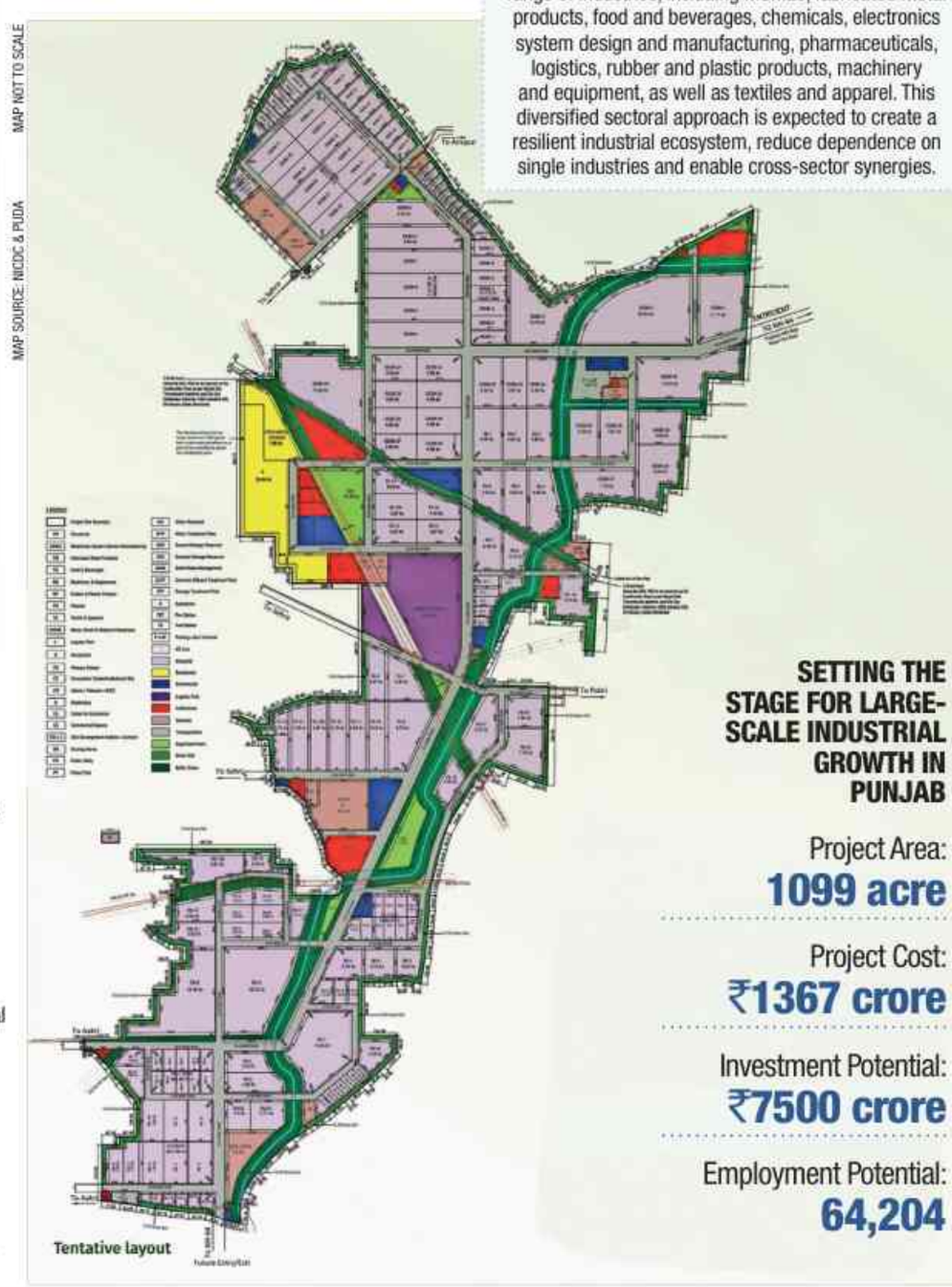
STRATEGIC LOCATION STRENGTHENS MARKET ACCESS

Situated along key industrial corridors, IMC Rajpura-Patiala enjoys seamless connectivity to major markets in North India, including Delhi NCR, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. The cluster is well connected through national highways and rail networks, enabling efficient logistics and reduced turnaround time for industries.

Its proximity to urban centres and airports enhances its appeal for export-oriented units and supply chain-driven businesses. This locational advantage positions the cluster at the intersection of production networks and consumption hubs, a critical factor for manufacturing competitiveness.

DIVERSE SECTORAL FOCUS TO DRIVE GROWTH

IMC Rajpura-Patiala has been designed to host a wide range of industries, including MSMEs, fabricated metal products, food and beverages, chemicals, electronics system design and manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, logistics, rubber and plastic products, machinery and equipment, as well as textiles and apparel. This diversified sectoral approach is expected to create a resilient industrial ecosystem, reduce dependence on single industries and enable cross-sector synergies.



SETTING THE STAGE FOR LARGE-SCALE INDUSTRIAL GROWTH IN PUNJAB

Project Area: **1099 acre**

Project Cost: **₹1367 crore**

Investment Potential: **₹7500 crore**

Employment Potential: **64,204**

INVESTMENT POTENTIAL

- Significant opportunity for large-scale domestic and global investments
- Focus on capital-intensive and high-value manufacturing sectors
- Strong multiplier impact on the regional economy

INFRASTRUCTURE EDGE

- Planned internal road network and industrial utilities
- Logistics-friendly location with access to major consumption centres
- Integrated industrial and support ecosystem

POLICY PUSH ENHANCES INVESTOR CONFIDENCE

The Punjab government's emphasis on ease of doing business has played a key role in strengthening the investment climate around IMC Rajpura-Patiala. Streamlined approvals, digital processes and proactive investor facilitation have reduced procedural delays and improved transparency. The focus on governance and execution is helping build confidence among investors and positioning Punjab as a competitive destination for industrial investments.

STRONG EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC MULTIPLIER IMPACT

IMC Rajpura-Patiala is expected to generate significant employment opportunities, both direct and indirect. Once fully operational, the cluster is estimated to create around 64,204 jobs across industrial units and support services.

Beyond job creation, the project is likely to have a strong multiplier effect on the regional economy by boosting ancillary industries, logistics networks and service sectors. The development of the Amritsar-Kolkata Industrial Corridor is also expected to contribute to GDP growth and strengthen manufacturing output.

TVK chief Vijay to launch campaign from Perambur

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Chennai: Permission has been granted for TVK president Vijay's first election rally in Chennai, with the party set to begin its campaign from Perambur on Monday. Vijay is likely to contest from the seat. TVK has also secured permission to hold a candidate introduction event in the city Sunday. Approvals came hours after Vijay approached EC, alleging officials were favouring DMK and denying permission for TVK's campaign events without reason.

He met CEO Archana Patnaik and submitted a representation seeking urgent EC intervention to ensure a level playing field. He demanded EC transfer key police and senior administrative officers, alleging their continued presence was affecting the fairness of the poll process.

Vadodara bridge, which killed 22 people, restored in 75 days

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Vadodara: The bridge connecting Vadodara and Anand, that collapsed on July 9, 2025, killing 22 people, is set to reopen for two-wheelers and pedestrians from April 2.

The work of Gambhira bridge is expected to be completed by March 31, with trials scheduled on April 1. This marks a rare instance of a disaster-hit bridge being repaired and put back into use with high-precision engineering.

The damaged bridge over the Mahi river has been temporarily restored using a steel structure, instead of being abandoned altogether — a move seldom seen outside difficult hilly terrains and rarely at this scale after a fatal collapse.

The restoration involved a complex engineering operation carried out under severe constraints. A 47m-long steel girder weighing around 100 tonnes was installed across the damaged span using an incremental rolling technique. The structure was pushed forward at a precise pace of 250mm every three minutes, with the entire rollout completed within 75 days.

Govt protecting people from fuel price rise: Modi

▶Continued from page 1

PMO

Inaugurating Noida International Airport on Saturday, PM Modi called it a new chapter for Viksit Bharat. Commercial flight operations will start in 45 to 60 days, civil aviation minister K Rammohan Naidu said

Sugarcane feedstock is a key source of ethanol.

In a recent speech in Parliament, the PM had highlighted the progress in ethanol blending, from a mere 1-1.5% a decade ago to nearly 20% today. This has reduced oil imports by approximately four and a half crore barrels per year, he had said, also citing electrification of railways, which has saved roughly 180 crore litres of diesel annually, and expansion of metro networks.

India achieved its E20 ethanol blending target — mixing 20% ethanol with petrol — ahead of schedule in 2025, a goal set under by the Modi govt to cut fuel import bills and reduce emissions. The All India Distillers' Association has offered to supply ethanol blends exceeding 20%. India's ethanol sector now has a cumulative production capacity of around 2,000 crore litres, of which over 1,000 crore litres is used for blending with petrol.

In his Jewar speech, Modi also said while crude prices had risen because of the US-Israel war with Iran, India has made all efforts to secure its supplies and ensure that common people are not affected by price rise. "We also import fuel from the war-affected area. Each country is taking measures to deal with this issue. We are also taking all measures to ensure common people do not face any stress," he said. Crude prices have surged globally, but this has not been reflected in retail prices of petrol and diesel in India.

"The issue arising from the war, we have discussed this in Parliament. I also spoke to chief ministers of different states on this. I again call on people to address this issue unitedly, peacefully. This is a global crisis. We have to care about our country and this is our strength. I also urge all party leaders that in a crisis like this avoid talk that is not good for the country," he said.

Wandering cheetah shifted to Kuno after 55 days in Raj

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Jaipur: After roaming across Rajasthan for 55 days, cheetah KP-2 was tranquillised and shifted to Madhya Pradesh's Kuno National Park Friday to prevent potential human-animal conflict.

KP-2, an offspring of the African feline Asha, spent 45 days in Baran district before moving to Kota for 10 days before it was shifted back, after the animal began preying on local livestock.

A senior forest official said: "The cheetah had killed goats on Thursday and cattle earlier after it entered Kota. There was a fear that people may harm the animal, so KP-2 was tranquillised, underwent a health check, and was transported to the Kuno reserve." The rescue operation was executed at Nimoda Ujaad village. "We planned the rescue after receiving the exact location from the monitoring team tracking KP-2. All officers and staff reached the site, followed the protocol to tranquillise the cheetah, conducted a health check, and subsequently transported it to MP," another senior official stated.

Entering Kota district on March 19, KP-2 moved through Itawa, Peepalda Samel and Sangaheri. The feline covered 30-40 km daily, navigating village outskirts, wheat fields and areas along the Chambal and Kali Sindh rivers.

Bishnoi gang's recce expert shot in leg, arrested after chase

Times News Network

TOI

Police with the injured accused at a hospital on Saturday

Jaipur: A 25-year-old man, allegedly a member of the Lawrence Bishnoi gang and linked directly to the incident of firing at the Mumbai residence of filmmaker Rohit Shetty on Jan 31-Feb 1 night, was shot in the leg during a police encounter in Rajasthan's Sriganganagar Friday evening after he allegedly opened fire at a checkpoint and tried to flee.

SP Hari Shankar identified the man as Akash Nigam, a resident of Agra in UP. The officer confirmed Nigam's link to the incident of firing at Shetty's house in Juhu area.

Investigators said he also conducted recce operations in Jaipur, Sriganganagar and Hanumangarh to execute targeted shootings.

The encounter occurred when a police team was carrying out stop-and-check operations as part of a drive against drugs, illegal arms and organised crime. During the blockade, a man wearing a black T-shirt approached on a black motorcycle without a registration number.

When police signalled him to stop, the rider made a sudden U-turn and sped towards Punjab, raising suspicion. The police team chased him in their vehicle. Near a village road, the suspect abandoned the motorcycle and attempted to flee on foot.

When cornered, the man allegedly fired three rounds at the police party using a revolver. Police retaliated, shooting him in the leg and overpowering him at the spot.

Man beheads ice vendor, places head on stove

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@timesofindia.com

Forensic expert said the act reflected a severe breakdown of the accused's mental stability

Lucknow: A 50-year-old man in a UP village, said to be mentally unstable, beheaded an ice vendor Saturday morning following an argument and took the severed head to his hut where he put it on fire on a stove.

The incident took place in Parshaval village of Barabanki. Villagers overpowered the man and handed him over to the police. According to police, a 25-year-old ice vendor was going on a bicycle when he had an argument with a 50-year-old man who lived in a nearby makeshift hut. In a fit of rage, the man attacked the ice vendor with a sharp-edged weapon and severed his head.

SP Arpit Vijayvargiya said an FIR had been lodged on the complaint of the victim's father. Preliminary investigation revealed that the accused had a history of violent behaviour and was reportedly mentally unstable. He had disputes with his brothers and wife and had been living separately.

Forensic expert Pradeep Saxena said the act reflected a severe breakdown of mental stability. "This is not a crime of impulse alone. The act of carrying the severed head home and placing it on fire suggests a symbolic or pathological urge. It may indicate cannibalistic ideation, though confirmation requires psychiatric evaluation," Saxena said.

NATIONAL HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY OF INDIA
(Ministry of Road Transport & Highways)
Government of India

Public Notice
Revision of User Fee applicable from 01.04.2026 to 31.03.2027 at Rampur Toll Plaza from Design Km. 0/000 to Km. 79/700 (NH 548B)

The public are hereby informed that pursuant to Govt. of India Gazette Notification S.O.2134 (E) dated 13.05.2025 and approval of Competent Authority, NHAI vide letter dated 23.03.2026 the Revised User fee rates at Rampur Toll Plaza from Design Km. 0/000 to Km. 79/700 shall be levied w.e.f. 01.04.2026 (00:00 Hrs) for the use of 2/4 lane Vijayapur - Sankeshwar Section from Design Km. 0/000 to Km. 79/700 (NH-548B) in the State of Karnataka.

The Revised User Fee Rates for FY 2026-27 to be levied w.e.f. 01.04.2026 (00:00 Hrs) at Rampur Toll Plaza from Design Km. 0/000 to Km. 79/700 of NH-548B is as below:

Rampur Toll Plaza, NH-548B
USER FEE RATES- From 01.04.2026 to 31.03.2027

Category	Fee for Single Journey	Fee for Return Journey within a day	Fee for monthly pass for 50 single journeys in a month	Fee for Commercial Vehicle registered within the District of plaza
Car/Jeep/Van/LMV	85	130	2850	45
LCV/LGV/Mini Bus	140	205	4605	70
Truck/Bus (2 Axle)	290	435	9645	145
3 Axle Commercial Vehicle	315	475	10525	160
Heavy Construction Machinery/ Earth Moving Equipment or Multi Axle Vehicle (MAV) (4-6 Axles)	455	680	15125	225
Oversized vehicles (7 or more axle)	550	830	18415	275

The rate for monthly pass applicable for local Non Commercial Vehicles residing within a distance of 20 kms from the Toll Plaza shall be Rs.350/-

2. **The following concessions are available as per the Gazette Notification at above Toll Plaza:**
   a. For Return journey within 24 hours from time of payment for all categories of vehicles the amount payable is one-half times the fee for one way journey (Discount 25%).
   b. For 50 Single journey in a month from date of payment for all categories of vehicles the Fee payable is Two-third of amount of the fee payable for fifty single journeys (Discount 33%).
   C. Fee for commercial vehicles (excluding vehicles plying under National permit) registered in the district where the fee plaza falls shall be 50% of the specified rate for that category of vehicle. (Discount 50%)
   d. A person who owns a mechanical vehicle registered for non-commercial purposes and resides within a distance of twenty kilometers from the fee plaza can avail a Monthly Pass for Rs.350 (Rupees Three Hundred and Fifty Only per month) for the year 2026-27 and is subject to revision every year as per the provisions of NH Fee Rule 2008 and its amendments thereof,
3. The list of exempted vehicles is as given in the amendment to NH Fee Rules dated 03.12.2010 vide GSR 950 E.
4. The Toll notification for this Plaza S.O No. 2134(E) dated 13.05.2025 has been published in Gazette of India.
5. For any complaints, emergency, suggestion and feedback please contact NHAI help line number 1033 or contact Office of the Project Director, NHAI PIU Bagalkot, Sh. Pawan R. Gurve, "Veerabhadreshwar Nilaya", Plot No: 15-C, Sector No: 73, 2nd Cross, Navanagar (Unit-2), Bagalkot-587103. Ph: 8130006081.

BUILDING A NATION, NOT JUST ROADS

CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS
OPEN E-TENDER

The following **E-Tenders** can be accessed under the link **www.ireps.gov.in**. Offers for such e-Tender can be submitted only electronically by accessing the link **www.ireps.gov.in → login → E-Tender Stores/Supply**. Vendors may also contact the following officials to obtain clarification regarding tender or IREPS related information, if any, **Dy. CMM/HQ/CLW/Chittaranjan, 9163340711** or **AMM/M, 9163340706. Office Address: Office of The PCMM/CLW/Chittaranjan.**

[A] No. COS/CRJ/PUB/e-Tender/19/0162, Date: 19/03/2026. Sl. No.: [1]. Tender No.: 75254176A. Brief Description of Item: Interlock assy. for Cab Doors and Lock assly. for Machine Room Doors & Gangway Door for WAG-9HC Twin Locomotives as per Drg. No. 1209-09.133-021, Alt.2, 1209-09.133-071, Alt.1, Specn. No.: CLW/MS/3/111, Alt.7 [**Warranty Period:** 120 Months after the date of delivery]. **Quantity: 396.00 Set. Earnest Money Deposit (Rupees):** ₹ 3,26,860.00. **Tender Closing Date & Time (IST): 09/04/2026 at 11:00 AM.**

[B] No. COS/CRJ/PUB/e-Tender/19/0162, Date: 19/03/2026. Sl. No.: [1]. Tender No.: 73261041A. Brief Description of Item: High Tensile Transition CB Coupler (Top Operated) with Top Lifting Hook, Top Lifting Assembly & Link for Top Operation in fitted condition but without High Capacity Draft Gear, Striker Block & Suspension Hook (For TR Screw Coupling) as per RDSO Drg. No.-SK.DL-4809, Alt.-1 or Latest Item No. 1 to 8, 12 - 14, 35 to 40 and 42 and Item No. 46 to 53. Except Item No. 9 to 11, 15 to 34, 41, 43 to 45 for WAG-9HC Locomotive. [**Warranty Period:** 30 Months after the date of delivery]. **Quantity: 550.00 Numbers. Earnest Money Deposit (Rupees):** ₹ 10,83,830.00. **Tender Closing Date & Time (IST): 10/04/2026 at 11:00 AM.**

[PR4/316] PCMM/CLW/Chittaranjan
Like us on: www.facebook.com/clwrailways

CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS
E-TENDER NOTICE

Tender Notice No: PCMM/CLW/HWH/E-Procurement/26/ 11, Dated:25/03/2026. PCMM/CLW/HWH on behalf of the President of India invites electronic bids from established reliable manufacturer for supply of the followings. The following E-Tender/s is for supply of materials for manufacture of Electric Locomotive. The Prospective / likely suppliers are requested to look up the website **www.ireps.gov.in** for detailed instructions. These are E-Tenders only electronic offer bids shall be accepted. **Sl. No.: [026]. Tender No.: 14252734B. Description of Stores: 1)** Contactor Type - 6 To Drg./Spec. No. CLW/ES/3/0034/C, **2)** Contactor For Control Electronics And Control CKT. ON (Contactor Type-4) To Drg./Spec. No. CLW/ES/3/0034/C. **Quantity: As Per Ten/Document. Due On:** 09/04/2026. **Tender Cost:** ₹ 0.00.

PR6/318 PCMM/CLW/Howrah
Visit us on: www.facebook.com/clwrailways

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
NOTICE FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (EOI) FOR EMPANELMENT

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites Expressions of Interest (EOI) for Empanelment of service providers for implementation of the reformed On-Board Service Policy.

The documents should be submitted in a sealed cover addressed to the office of **The Principal Chief Mechanical Engineer, 2nd Floor, Mechanical Department, Rail Soudha, Gadag road, Hubballi-580020**, either in person or by post.

Last date for Submission of Application :
Upto 18.00 hrs on 22.04.2026

For details log on : www.swr.indianrailways.gov.in

Deputy Chief Machanical Engineer/ Headquarter/,Hubballi
PUB/1034/AAD360/PRB/SWR/2025-26

Download the **RailOne** app. RailOne is the all-in-one railway app by Indian Railways. Passengers can book reserved tickets, unreserved tickets, platform tickets, and season passes, check PNR status, order food, and access many more services at their fingertips. Use digital payment to book unreserved tickets through **RailOne** app, and enjoy up to a **3%** discount.

South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | @SWRRLYHQ | @sw_railways

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, Invites E-Tenders for the following work

Publication of E-Tender Notice No.: B-TRD-29-2025-26-OT-47 Dated : 24-03-2026

Item of work	Approx. Value
Provision of various OHE/PSI caution boards and Sectioning Diagrams over Bengaluru.	Rs. 72,10,395.49

Publication of E-Tender Notice No.: B-TRD-29-2025-26-OT-48 Dated : 24-03-2026

Item of work	Approx. Value
Lighting arrangement for tower cars of Bengaluru Division.	Rs. 10,27,675.66

Last date for submission of bids for above **Tender is:Upto 15:00 Hrs. on 16-04-2026**

For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in

Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer / TRD Bengaluru
PUB/1020/AAF/PRB/SWR/2025-26

Download the **RailOne** app. RailOne is the all-in-one railway app by Indian Railways. Passengers can book reserved tickets, unreserved tickets, platform tickets, and season passes, check PNR status, order food, and access many more services at their fingertips. Use digital payment to book unreserved tickets through **RailOne** app, and enjoy up to a **3%** discount.

South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | SWRRLY

AHMEDABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
MAHANAGAR SEVA SADAN
STREETLIGHT/TRAFFIC SIGNAL DEPARTMENT

E-TENDER NOTICE

Tender for Comprehensive Operation and Maintenance contract of Street Light Poles, SITC of Street Light work at Western side of Ahmedabad city for Five Years.

Prebid meeting at A.M.C. Danapith office	Date: 16/04/2026 at 11:00 hrs.
Last date of tender submission (Online)	Date: 29/04/2026 up to 18:00 Hrs..
Last date of tender submission (Hard Copy)	Date: 30/04/2026 up to 14:00 Hrs.
Detail and Tenders available on	On web site www.nprocure.com or https://amc.nprocure.com

K-RIDE
RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT COMPANY (KARNATAKA) LIMITED
(A Joint Venture of Govt. of Karnataka & Ministry of Railways)

CIN: U60100KA2000SGC028171

No. KRIDE/HR/195/Vacancy Notification/04/Dir(BD&F)/2026 Date: 27.03.2026

Vacancy Notice No. 12/2026

K-RIDE, a JV of Govt of Karnataka & Ministry of Railways, executing the **BANGALORE SUBURBAN RAIL PROJECT & RAILWAY DOUBLING PROJECTS**, invites applications for the following post on Deputation/Contract basis.

Vacancy Notice No.	Name of the post	No.of Posts	Grade
12/2026	Director (Business Development & Finance)	01	BLE

Last date for submitting applications is **30.04.2026.**
For detailed eligibility conditions and other details please visit: **https://kride.in/careers-in-k-ride/.**

DIPR/CP/6511/Zen/2025-26 Sd/- **GENERAL MANAGER /HR (I/c)**

KridePrm | Kride Bsrp | kride_bsrp | KRIDE,BSRP

AIR FORCE SCHOOL
Yelahanka, Bengaluru-560063 (Affiliated to CBSE)

Website: www.airforceschoolyel.net e-mail: [illegible]@gmail.com

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

[illegible]

Sl. No.	Item Description	Qty
1	Interactive Display: [illegible]	[illegible]
2	Display Station: [illegible]	15 Nos
3	UPS: [illegible]	15 Nos
4	Supply, installation, [illegible]	15 Nos
5	Annual maintenance for 15 interactive boards and UPS supplied [illegible]	1 year

[illegible]

Sl. No.	Event	Date & Time
1	Tender start date	[illegible]
2	Pre-bid meeting	[illegible]
3	Last date & time for [illegible] bids	[illegible]
4	Opening of Technical bid	[illegible]
5	Opening of [illegible]	[illegible]

[illegible] Executive Director AF School Yelahanka

NORTH WESTERN KARNATAKA ROAD TRANSPORT CORPORATION
STORES AND PURCHASE DEPARTMENT
Central Office, Gokul Road, Hubballi - 580030.

No:NWKRTC/2025-26/AUCTION013 and AUCTION014 Date: 28-03-2026

E-AUCTION NOTIFICATION

Scrapped Material Lots available at the Divisions and Regional Workshop, Hubballi of NWKRTC will be auctioned through e-Auction Portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

1) Last Date and Time for Expression of Interest to participate in the Auction and for Submission of Bid Documents to participate in the e-Auction: **10-04-2026 till 17.30 Hours. 2)** Live Auction on **17-04-2026 and 18-04-2026, 10.00 AM onwards.** For details contact the Mobile Phone No: **7022009113**

Sd/-
Controller of Stores & Purchases
NWKRTC, Hubballi

DIPR/Dharwad/1404/Adverto/2025-26

AHMEDABAD MUNICIPAL TRANSPORT SERVICE
Transport House, Outside Jamalpur gate, Jamalpur, Ahmedabad 380022, Gujarat, India.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) Selection of a partner for developing approx. 800 smart bus shelters on build, operate, maintain and transfer on PPP basis with advertisement rights for 15 years for AMTS (2nd call).

Ahmedabad Municipal Transport Service (AMTS) invites proposals from duly qualified interested parties for build, operate, maintain and transfer of approx. 800 smart bus shelter on PPP basis with Advertisement right for 15 years for Ahmedabad City. Interested parties may download RFP from website **www.advisionamc.com** from **Dt. 30.03.2026**

Sd/- Dy. Municipal Commissioner/Transport Manager,

CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS
OPEN E-TENDER

No. COS/CRJ/PUB/e-Tender/19/0162, Date: 23/03/2026. The following **E-Tenders** can be accessed under the link **www.ireps.gov.in.** Offers for such e-Tender can be submitted only electronically by accessing the link **www.ireps.gov.in → login → E-Tender Stores/Supply.** Vendors may also contact the following officials to obtain clarification regarding tender or IREPS related information if any, Dy.CMM/HQ/CLW/Chittaranjan, 9163340711 or AMM/HQ-II, 9163340724. **Office Address: Office of The PCMM /CLW/Chittaranjan. Sl. No.:[1]. Tender No.: 70260031. Brief Description of Item: (1)** Supply, installation, testing and commissioning of Onboard KAVACH Loco equipment as per RDSO Spec no. RDSO/SPN/196/2020, Ver 4.0 or latest for EF-12K locomotives as per the scheme approved by COE/IRISET & RDSO. The scope of supply will also include: Complete wiring, harnessing, cabling and connection with Loco KAVACH System. Warranty Period 04 (four) years from the date of issue of completion certificate (as stipulated in Annexure-I, Para- 5 & 6). Annual Maintenance for 11 (eleven) years will be as per Annexure-I. Zonal Railway shall provide SIM as per requirement. **[Warranty Period: 60 Months after the date of delivery], (2)** Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Onboard KAVACH Loco equipment for EF12K Locomotive as per RDSO Spec no. RDSO/SPN/196/2020, Ver-4.0 or latest. The scope of supply will also include: Complete wiring, harnessing, cabling and connection with Loco KAVACH System. Zonal Railway shall provide SIM as per requirement. **[Warranty Period: 60 Months after the date of delivery], (3)** Supply, installation, testing and commissioning of Onboard KAVACH Loco equipment as per RDSO Spec no. RDSO/SPN/196/2020, Ver 4.0 or latest for Three phase/ Conventional locomotives as per the scheme approved by COE/IRISET & RDSO. The scope of supply will also include: Complete wiring, harnessing, cabling and connection with Loco KAVACH System. Warranty Period 04 (four) years from the date of issue of completion certificate (as stipulated in Annexure-I, Para- 5 & 6). Annual Maintenance for 11 (eleven) years will be as per Annexure-I. Zonal Railway shall provide SIM as per requirement. **[Warranty Period: 60 Months after the date of delivery], (4)** Supply, installation, testing and commissioning of Onboard KAVACH Loco equipment as per RDSO Spec no. RDSO/SPN/196/2020, Ver 4.0 or latest for WAG-12 locomotives as per the scheme approved by COE/IRISET & RDSO. The scope of supply will also include: Complete wiring, harnessing, cabling and connection with Loco KAVACH System. Warranty Period 04 (four) years from the date of issue of completion certificate (as stipulated in Annexure-I, Para- 5 & 6). Annual Maintenance for 11 (eleven) years will be as per Annexure-I. Zonal Railway shall provide SIM as per requirement. **[Warranty Period: 60 Months after the date of delivery], (5)** Supply, installation, testing and commissioning of Onboard KAVACH Loco equipment as per RDSO Spec no. RDSO/ SPN/ 196/2020, Ver 4.0 or latest for Siemens Dahod D-9 locomotives as per the scheme approved by COE/ IRISET & RDSO. The scope of supply will also include: Complete wiring, harnessing, cabling and connection with Loco KAVACH System. Warranty Period 04 (four) years from the date of issue of completion certificate (as stipulated in Annexure-I, Para- 5 & 6). Annual Maintenance for 11 (eleven) years will be as per Annexure-I. Zonal Railway shall provide SIM as per requirement. **[Warranty Period: 60 Months after the date of delivery]. Quantity** : 4555.00 Set. **Earnest Money Deposit (Rupees):** ₹ 5000000.00. **Tender Closing Date & Time (IST):14/04/2026 at 11:00 AM.**

PR5/317 PCMM/CLW/CRJ.
visit us on:www.facebook.com/clwrailways

Government of Karnataka - Karnataka Forest Department
Assistant Conservator of Forests, Hosanagara Sub Division, Hosanagara.
District: Shivamogga, Taluk: Hosanagara,
e-Mail ID: acfhnr@gmail.com

No:ACF/HNF/Outsource/TENDER/CR-90/25-26 D: 27.03.2026

e-Tender Notice (E-Tender Publication through e-Procurement Portal http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in)

Tenders have been invited from interested bidders and registered service organizations through the e-procurement portal for the recruitment of personnel under the outsourcing scheme in various forest areas of Sagara Forest Division for the year 2025-27, for a total of 59 posts—Data Entry Operator/Computer Operator (15), Vehicle Drivers (10), Watchmen/Security Guards (26), and 'D' Grade Employees (8)—for the period from April 2026 to 31.03.2027 or till the next tender, at a total cost of Rs. 1.81 crores in the financial year 2026-27. The last date for submission of the e-tender is 13.04.2026. For more information, this office may be contacted, or details of the tender can be obtained by visiting the official website http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in

Sd/- Assistant Conservator of Forests, Hosanagara Sub-Division, Hosanagara Taluk, Shivamogga Dist.

DIPR/smg/hsm:s/25-26/15/03/2100

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

No. JHS/Comm/e-Auction/26/145 Date: 27.03.2026

E-Auction Notice

On Behalf of The President Of India, The Divisional Railway Manager, (Commercial) Jhansi invites e-auction as per categories given as under:-

Cat.: Parcel	**Catalogue No.:** JHS-LEASING-61

Asset Details: 01- Train number 22547 = 02 SLR-F-I, **02-** Train number 12279 = 01 SLR-F-I, **03-** Train number 22198 = 01 SLR-F-I, **04-** Train number 12198 = 01 SLR-F-I & F-II, **05-** Train number 22195 = 01 SLR-F-I, **06-** Train number 11107 = 02 SLR-R-I & F-I, **07-** Train number 11086 = 01 SLR-R-I, **08-** Train number 11123 = 01 SLR-R-I, **09-** Train number 12049 = 01 SLR-F-I.

Auction Start: 09.04.2026 at 11:00 hrs
Auction End: 09.04.2026 at 13:10 hrs

Note: Prospective bidders are requested to visit e-Auction Leasing module on **IREPS** website **(www.ireps.gov.in)**. The Lot-wise details are available therein under the above mentioned Catalogue Number. 675/26 (ADM)

North central railways | www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in | @CPRONCR

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-Tender Notice No.- JHS-N-W-27-26 **Date- 26.03.2026**

E-TENDERING NOTICE

Sr. Divisional Signal & Telecommunication Engineer/Jhansi, DRM's office, Jhansi, for and on behalf of President of India invites open Tender through on Line **(E-Tendering)** for the following works.

E-Tender No.- JHS-N-W-27-26

Description of work: Provision of RCC boundary wall along the track on approaches in VGLJ-DHO Section of Jhansi Division for financial year 2025-26.

Approx. Cost	Earnest Money	Cost of Tender Form
₹ 17959522.50/-	₹ 239800/-	Nil

Opening of tender: 24.04.2026 Time **15.00, Completion period from issue of letter of acceptance:** 12 Months.

• Tender on line can be submitted upto **15.00** hrs on **24.04.2026** • For full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railways website **www.ireps.gov.in.**
(NORTH CENTRAL RLY/JHANSI DIVISION-S AND T) **682/26 FA**

North central railways | @CPRONCR | www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in

O/O THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
South-East Road-1, PWD, GNCTD
Ishwar Nagar, Kalka Mora, New Delhi-65
Ph: No.[illegible], Fax No.[illegible] E-mail: eepwddelhim412@gmail.com

INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR BIDDERS FOR e-TENDERING FORMING PART OF BID DOCUMENT

The Executive Engineer, Division South East Road-1, (M-412), PWD, Ishwar Nagar, New Delhi-110065 (E-Mail ID: eepwddelhim412@gmail.com) on behalf of the President of India invites on online Percentage Rate tender from CPWD enlisted contractors of appropriate class & category and firms/contractors of repute satisfying the set eligibility criteria in two bid system for the following work:

NIT No.:	[illegible]
Name of Work -	Strengthening and other works of various roads under South Maintenance Zone, PWD during 2026-27.
Estimated Cost	Rs. 256,46,85,276/-
Earnest Money	Rs. 2,88,46,853/-
Performance Guarantee	5% of the Tendered value of the work + EPG for abnormally low bid
Enhanced Performance Guarantee (EPG)	An amount equivalent to the difference between 25% less the amount of ECPT and the quoted rates shall be payable
Security Deposit	2.5% of the Tendered value + Additional Security Deposit @ 10% of total cost of work done.
Time Allowed	06 (Six Months)
Pre-Bid conference	Date 07/04/2026 at 12.30 PM. Pre-Bid conference shall be held in the conference room of the O/o Chief Engineer, South (M) Zone, MSO Building, New Delhi-110002. Intending bidders may send their queries on e-mail atleast 3 days before the scheduled pre-bid meeting.

Further details can be seen on the website govt.procurement.delhi.gov.in

Executive Engineer, PWD, South East Road-1, Ishwar Nagar, New Delhi-65

DMK's list of 164 candidates contains over 60 new faces

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chennai: DMK on Saturday released its list of 164 candidates, of which more than 60 are fresh faces, while most ministers and seniors party functionaries have been fielded against from their seats.

Chief minister **M K Stalin**, before releasing the list of candidates, paid respect to former CMs C N Annadurai and M Karunanidhi at their memorials on the Marina beachfront. Later, responding to criticism that DMK delayed the release of the candidate list, Stalin told reporters, "Though we are late, we are the latest."

Explaining the delay, Stalin said there were many alliance parties with whom they needed to discuss numbers and had to satisfy everyone. "There was no delay, but we need to unify everyone," Stalin said.

Asked about the alliance, Stalin said 2021 was a mega alliance and this alliance is a "mega mega alliance". He said he would release DMK's poll manifesto on Sunday and start his campaign from March 31. In Chennai, DMK has retained 11 candidates, including CM M K Stalin, Udhayanidhi Stalin, state health minister Ma Subramanian, and HR & CE minister P K Sekarbabu.

BATTLEGROUND TAMIL NADU

While retaining most seniors, DMK has given a considerable number of seats to youngsters. The age difference varies from 86 years (water resources minister Duraimurugan) to as low as 26, the age of Avinashi candidate V Kokila Mani. Among the 164 candidates, 19 are women.

Kerala BJP sees plot behind misuse of party seal in EC docus

Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala BJP has alleged a political plot behind the office of the chief electoral officer (CEO) sharing documents with BJP seal to political parties.

The controversy erupted after the CPI(M) flagged the issue on the social media platform X, sharing an affidavit attached to a March 19, 2019, letter sent to political parties that bore the Kerala BJP seal instead of the Election Commission's official seal.

The EC had termed it a "purely clerical error" and said it had been rectified immediately. After the row erupted, CEO Rathan U Kelkar on Saturday sent the deputy CEO and a section officer back to their parent departments.

However, BJP state general secretary S Suresh said Saturday that the state election commission (EC) was acting as the B team of CPM. "We seriously suspect that EC has also joined the attempts by state govt and CPM to sabotage the conduct of a free and fair election in Kerala," he said. TNN

(With PTI inputs)

Shah unveils BJP 'chargesheet' against TMC

Targets Didi Over Jobs, Infiltration

RohitKhanna@timesofindia.com

Kolkata: Union home minister Amit Shah unveiled Saturday BJP's political "chargesheet" against Trinamool Congress govt, accusing it of 15 years of misrule and urging voters to choose between "fear" and "trust" in the April assembly elections.

At the launch, Shah targeted CM Mamata Banerjee, accusing her of allegedly invoking a "victim card" to deflect attention from governance failures. "At times she got her leg broken, at other times she had her head bandaged, and sometimes she even fell ill. Then she stands before the EC, feigning helplessness and hurling abuses at the institution. I've come to tell her that the people of Bengal have understood her politics of playing the victim card," he said.

BATTLEGROUND WEST BENGAL

Marking a strategic shift, BJP framed the document — a precursor to its manifesto — as a granular, "ward-by-ward" audit of governance. Shah urged voters to "come out of fear and connect with the trusted one". The chargesheet lists alleged failures across 14 sectors, foregrounding corruption, healthcare, unemployment and education. It claims 30 lakh jobs were wiped out, while over 40 lakh youth were forced to migrate. Shah linked the state election to national security, alleging Bengal had become a "principal corridor" for illegal infiltration and calling Trinamool a threat beyond the state.

He challenged Banerjee on border management and electoral integrity: "Infiltrators were allowed by Trinamool in West Bengal.

"The governance by Trinamool has been so bad that people felt it was better during the Left Front regime."

The chargesheet, released by Shah along with Bengal BJP netas in Kolkata on Saturday, lists alleged failures across 14 sectors

SIR will sound death knell for BJP: Mamata

Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee on Saturday said SIR would become BJP's death knell, arguing that "BJP will end up losing the Centre in its effort to destroy Bengal", report **Dwaipayan Ghosh and Tanuja Singh Deo.**

She alleged BJP had resorted to SIR to delete the names of women and members of the minority community because it feared Bengal voters. "I fought against this on the streets and in Supreme Court... Most married women have been placed under EC adjudication since their surnames and addresses have changed after marriage... Muslim women have been mercilessly deleted from voters' list," the TMC chief said.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The general public are hereby informed that my client has entered into an agreement for purchase of the Immovable Property described in the Schedule hereunder from its owner **M/S. PAL INTERNATIONAL REALTORS & TRADERS (P) LTD.**, a Private Limited Company duly incorporated under the Companies Act, 2013, having its registered office at Udupi Krishna Bhavan, No.91, Jyothi Nivas College Road, 5th Block, Koramangala Industrial Layout, Bengaluru-560095, represented by its Directors, **1. MR. V.S. SRIKANTH & 2. MRS. SHYLAJA SRIKANTH**, duly authorized vide Board Resolution passed in the meeting of Board of Directors of the company held on 23.03.2026. Any person/s having any claim/rights/interest over the Schedule Property or any objections for said sale of the property, may file their objections in writing, along with supporting documents viz. Agreements, JDA, GPA, MOU & other contract agreements, addressed to the undersigned **within 7 days** from the date of publication of this Notice, failing which, it shall be construed that there are no claims of any sort over the said property and my client shall be advised to proceed with the purchase.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

ALL THAT Piece & Parcel of Commercial Property bearing **E PID No.8310441521, Property bearing No.55, Property Old No.301/295/10,** Assessment No.2119/301/295/10, duly converted from agricultural to non-agricultural industrial purpose vide Conversion order bearing No.B.Dis.ALN.SR146/1979-80, dated 24.05.1980, order passed by the Thasildhar, Anekal Taluk, situated at **Bommasandra Village, Attibele Hobli, Anekal Taluk,** Bengaluru, measuring an extent of 10 Guntas **(10890 square feet),** comprises of building consisting Basement Floor, constructed area 6714 square feet, Ground Floor, constructed area 6714 square feet, First Floor, constructed area 6714 square feet and Second Floor, constructed area 6714 square feet, totally built up area 26856 square feet, now the area comes under the purview of Town Municipality, Bommasandra Ward No.3 and bounded on the:

East by : Property belonging to Saraswathi Ammal
West by : Bengaluru Hosur Road;
North by : Property being portion of Sy.No.55 belongs to Sreenivasa Reddy
South by : Property belongs to Rama Murthy.

Mr. K.B. THIPPE SWAMY, Advocate No.22, L.S No.25, First Floor, SSB Mattada Complex, Tank Bund Road, Bengaluru-560 009.

Government of India
NATIONAL HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY OF INDIA
(Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Government of India)

PUBLIC NOTICE
ON USER FEE (TOLL) RATES AT HIREHALLI TOLL PLAZA AT KM 341+300
APPLICABLE FROM 00.00 HRS OF 01.04.2026

The Public are hereby informed that pursuant to approval of user fee rates vide letter dated 23.03.2026 of NHAI, the user fee rates for use of section of Byrapura Challakere from Km 308+550 to Km 358+500 on NH-150A are as under w.e.f. 01.04.2026 at Hirehalli Toll Plaza (Chainage: 341+300 Km near Hirehalli village, Chitradurga District in the State of Karnataka)

Amount in Rs.

Sl. No.	Type of Vehicle	Single Journey	Return Journey	Multiple Journey Pass	Commercial Vehicle within District
1	Car, Jeep, Van or Light Motor Vehicle	75	115	2515	40
2	Light Commercial Vehicle, Light Goods Vehicle or Mini Bus	120	185	4065	60
3	Bus or Truck (2 Axle)	255	385	8515	130
4	Three Axle Commercial Vehicles	280	420	9290	140
5	Heavy Construction Machinery or Earth Moving Equipment (EME) or Multi Axle Vehicles (MAV) (Four to Six Axles)	400	600	13355	200
6	Oversized Vehicles (Seven or more Axles)	490	730	16260	245

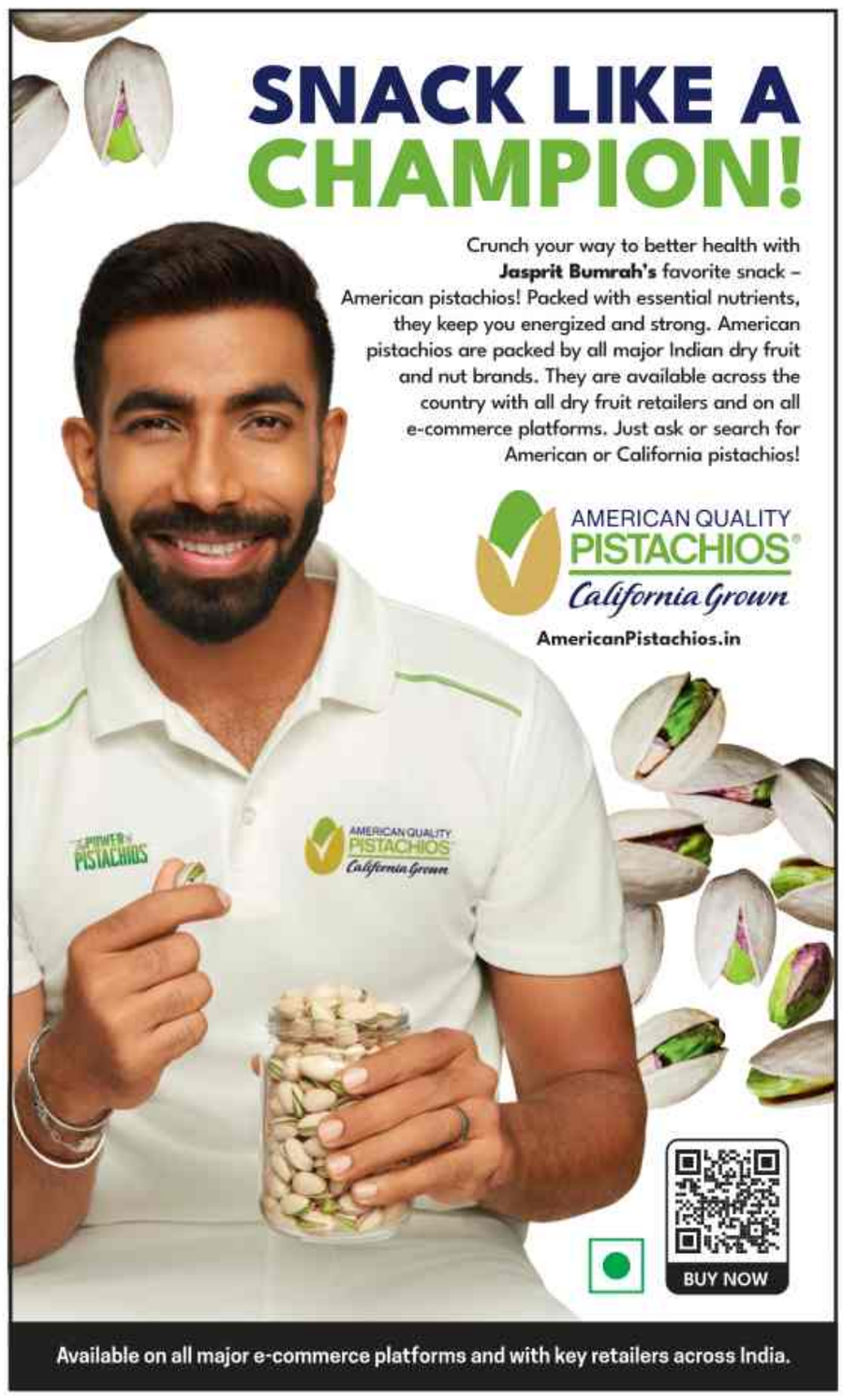
- The Annual Pass for the FY 2026-27 is Rs.3075/- for one year validity or 200 toll plaza crossings.
- The monthly pass rate for local non commercial personal vehicle is Rs.350/- for the year 2026-27

2. The above section is developed under HAM (the above section is developed as per provisions of Contract Agreements dated 09.05.2018 and IE vide letter dated 24.01.2023 certified the completed length of 49.95 Km for putting on commercial operation). The above rates are applicable for a completed length of 49.95 Km, which comprises of following:

Type of section	Length (Km)	Equivalent Length (Km) for which user fee is to be levied	Lane Configuration
Straight Section	49.95	49.95	4/6-lane
Bypass (costing > Rs.10.0 Cr.)	Nil	Nil	Nil
Structures (length > 60m)	Nil	Nil	Nil

3. The following concessions are available at above toll plaza:
(i) Return journey within 24 hours from time of payment for all categories of vehicles (discount 25%).
(ii) 50 single journeys in a month from date of payment for all categories of vehicles (discount-33%).
(iii) Pass at Rs.350/- per calendar month for non-commercial vehicle residing within 20 km from toll plaza.
(iv) Commercial vehicle (excluding those plying under National Permit) registered in the District of Toll Plaza (discount 50%).
(v) The Annual Pass for the FY 2026-27 is Rs.3075/- for one year validity or 200 toll plaza crossings.
4. The list of exempted vehicles is as given in the Amendment to Fee Rules dated 03.12.2010 vide GSR 950(E).
5. The vehicle, which is loaded in excess of permissible load, shall pay 10 times the applicable fee rate and remove the excess load to make use of highway.
6. The Capital Cost of the Project is Rupees 1195.54 crores. The capital cost is subject to variation as the activities of land acquisition, utility shifting, tree cutting, etc. are yet to be completed and the final capital cost will be separate. The user fee (toll) rates shall be reduced to 40% on recovery of capital cost.
7. For viewing the fee notification SO No. 509 (E) dated 03.02.2021 published in the Gazette, letter of NHAI dated 23.03.2026 containing approval of rates, etc., the website **https://rajmargyatra.nhai.gov.in** may be visited.
8. For any enquiry and/or giving complaints/suggestions, please contact: Project Director, National Highways Authority of India, Project Implementation Unit, House No. 1383, Samrat Layout, Bank Colony, Behind SRE BPCL Petrol Bunk, Chitradurga 577502, Karnataka, Ph: 08194-200498 E-mail: **chi@nhai.org**

BUILDING A NATION NOT JUST ROADS



कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियन्ता,
सिंचाई कार्य मण्डल, पिथौरागढ़

पत्रांक : 1067 / सि०का०म०पि० / निविदा / 2025–26 दिनांक: 28.03.2026

ई–निविदा सूचना संख्या–05 / अधी०अभि० / 2025–26

महामहिम राज्यपाल, उत्तराखण्ड की ओर से अधीक्षण अभियंता, सिंचाई कार्य मण्डल, पिथौरागढ़ द्वारा निम्नलिखित कार्यों हेतु ई–टेंडरिंग के माध्यम से ऑनलाइन टू–बिड सिस्टम (Two Bid System) में निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है।

1– मा० मुख्यमन्त्री घोषणा सं०–24 / 2023 के अन्तर्गत Slope Protection Works of Khotila and Ghatdhar, Dharchula Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand.

नोट:–

1. निविदाओं से सम्बन्धित सभी सूचनाएँ एवं निविदा–बिड प्रपत्र उत्तराखण्ड सरकार की वेबसाइट **www.uktenders.gov.in** पर दिनांक 31.03.2026 से ऑनलाइन उपलब्ध होंगे।
2. प्रदर्शित योजना प्रशासनिक एवं वित्तीय स्वीकृति की प्रत्याशा में आमंत्रित की जा रही है, योजना स्वीकृत न होने पर ठेकेदार का कोई भी क्लेम मान्य नहीं होगा।

(एच०सी० सिंह) अधीक्षण अभियन्ता

ESIC Medical College & Hospital Naroda-Bapunagar (Khokhra Campus)
Employees' State Insurance Corporation
(Ministry of Labour & Employment, Govt. of India)
Opp. Khokhra Municipal Swimming Pool, Balbhavan Road, Khokhra, Maninagar East, Ahmedabad, Gujarat - 380008 (ISO 9001-2015 Certified)
Website: www.esic.gov.in • Email: dean-naroda.gj@esic.gov.in

No. 373/Z/12/16/Faculty_Rectt./2025-Estt. (Advt No.01 of 2026) Date: 23-03-2026

WALK-IN INTERVIEW

Walk in Interview for Recruitment of Teaching Faculty (i.e. 8-Professor, 13-Associate Professor & 11-Assistant Professor), 3-Senior Residents and 6-Tutors on contract basis at ESIC Medical College & Hospital, Naroda-Bapunagar, Ahmedabad (Gujarat), as per detailed advertisement No.01 of 2026 on Website.

Reporting time	Date of Interview	Name of Department for Interview
From 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM	07/04/2026 (Tuesday)	Anatomy, Physiology, Biochemistry, Microbiology, Pharmacology, Psychiatry.
	08/04/2026 (Wednesday)	Community Medicine, Forensic Medicine & Toxicology, General Medicine, Pediatrics, Orthopedics, Radiology.
	09/04/2026 (Thursday)	Dermatology, ENT, Ophthalmology, General Surgery, Dentistry.
Venue	ESIC Medical College & Hospital Naroda-Bapunagar Office of the Dean, 3rd Floor, Opp. Municipal Swimming Pool, Khokhra, Ahmedabad, Gujarat–380008	

For more details please visit our website: **www.esic.gov.in** or **https://mcnaroda.esic.gov.in** -Sd/-
Dean, ESIC Medical College & Hospital, Ahmedabad.

PUBLIC NOTICE

My client is desirous of jointly developing the schedule property, with the respective owners, and I am investigating the title of the same, herein referred to as **"Schedule property".**

Any person/ having objection to the above mentioned transaction or any person/s claim or demand in relation the Schedule property or any part thereof, may lodge his/her/their statement/s objection/s and/ or claim/s or demand in relation the schedule property or any part thereof, may lodge his/her/their statement objection/s and/or claims/s in writing along with documentary evidence in support thereof with the undersigned, **within 10 (Ten) days** from the date of publication of this notice. In the absence of any genuine and/or rightful objection and/or claims, we will issue our report on title in respect Schedule property, as if no claim/s or objection/s exist and that they have been consciously waived and abandoned by such person/s and my client may go ahead in developing the schedule property.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

Property situated at **Chokkanahalli Village, Yelahanka Hobli, Yelahanka Taluk, Bangalore**

Sl No.	Sy. No.	Extent		Boundaries				Present Owners
		Acres	Guntas	East by	West by	North by	South by	
1	Sy No. 90/1	1	7	Sy No. 90/5	Sampinge Halli Border	Nakshatra Apartment/ GP North Avenue Apartment;	Sy No. 89/1	1). Smt. Renukamma. C.R. 2). Smt. Harini. C.R.

For **NAYARKODI ASSOCIATES,**
Dhiraj Nayarkodi , Advocate
#62, 5th main, AECS Layout, Sanjaynagar main road, Bangalore-560094.
Branch Office at 7th floor, High Point IV, Palace road, Bangalore-01, Ph: 9886755278.
Date: 29.02.2026
Place : Bengaluru

NATIONAL HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY OF INDIA
(Ministry of Road Transport & Highways)
Government of India

PUBLIC NOTICE ON REVISION OF USER FEE (TOLL) RATES FOR FY 2026-27 AT KHADERNAGAR FEE PLAZA

The public are hereby informed that pursuant to approval of revised user fee rates by the Competent Authority of NHAI vide letter dated 23.03.2026, the user fee rates for the use of section of National Highway – 50 from Bidar (Km.54.370) to Humnabad (Km.101.400) are going to be revised with effect from 01.04.2026 at Khadernagar Fee Plaza Km.67.600 (Taluk: Bidar, District: Bidar) in the State of Karnataka:

Category of Vehicles	Fee for single journey (in Rs.)	Fee for return journey within a day (in Rs.)	Fee for monthly pass for 50 single journeys in a month (in Rs.)	Fee for single journey commercial vehicles registered within the district of plaza (in Rs.)
Car/Jeep/Van	60	90	1980	30
Light Commercial Vehicle/Light Goods Vehicle/Mini Bus	95	145	3200	50
Truck/Bus (Two Axles)	200	300	6705	100
3 Axle Commercial Vehicles	220	330	7315	110
Heavy Construction Machinery (HCM)/ Earth Moving Equipment (EME)/ MAV (4-6 Axles)	315	475	10510	160
Oversized vehicles (7 or more axles)	385	575	12795	190

- The rate for Monthly Pass applicable for local Non Commercial Vehicles residing within a distance of 20 km from the Toll Plaza shall be Rs.350/-.
- The Annual Pass for the FY 2026-27 is Rs.3075/- for one year validity or 200 toll plaza crossings (Whichever is earlier) for mechanical vehicles registered for non-commercial purpose.

2) The above section of Highway was developed on EPC mode and as per provisions of Contract Agreement dated 12.02.2021. Authority's Engineer vide letter dated 04.08.2025 certified the completed length of 47.03km (from Bidar to Humnabad section) for putting on commercial operation. The above rates are applicable for a completed length of 47.03km, which comprises of the following:

Type of section	Length (Km)	Equivalent Length (Km) for which user fee is to be levied	Lane Configuration
Straight Section	35.70	35.70	Two Lane with Paved Shoulders
Straight Section	6.173	6.173	Four Lane
Bypass (costing > Rs.10Cr.)	4.688	4.688	Four Lane
Structures (length > 60m)	0.469	4.690	Four Lane

3) The following concessions are available at above toll plaza:
a) Return journey within 24 hours from time of payment for all categories of vehicles (discount 25%).
b) 50 single journeys in a month from date of payment for all categories of vehicles (discount 33%).
c) Local Pass at Rs.350/- per calendar month for non-commercial vehicle residing within 20km from User Fee Plaza.
d) Commercial vehicles (excluding those plying under National Permit) registered in the district of User Fee Plaza (discount 50%).
e) The Annual Pass for the FY 2026-27 is Rs.3075/- for one year validity or 200 toll plaza crossings (Whichever is earlier) for mechanical vehicles registered for non-commercial purpose.
4) The exemption from payment of user fee is being provided as per the National Highways Fee (Determination of Rates and Collection) Rules, 2008 and subsequent Amendment Rules.
5) The vehicle, which is loaded in excess of permissible load, shall pay 10 times the applicable fee rate and remove the excess load to make use of highway.
6) After recovery of the Capital Cost of the project, the user fee leviable shall be reduced to 40% of the rates and shall be revised annually in accordance with the said rules.
7) For viewing the User Fee Gazette Notification published vide S.O. 4657(E) dated 22.10.2024 and approved User Fee Rates, the website "https://rajmargyatra.nhai.gov.in/" may be visited.
8) For any enquiry, complaints and suggestions, please contact Shri. Naveen S., Project Director, NHAI, Project Implementation Unit, Plot No. 65, Kothari Layout, Venkatesh Nagar, Kalaburagi – 585 102 Mob No. 8130006072.

BUILDING A NATION, NOT JUST ROADS

NATIONAL HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY OF INDIA
(Ministry of Road Transport & Highways)
Government of India

PUBLIC NOTICE ON REVISION OF USER FEE (TOLL) RATES FOR FY 2026-27 AT KANNOLI FEE PLAZA

The public are hereby informed that pursuant to approval of revised user fee rates by Competent Authority of NHAI vide letter dated 23.03.2026, the user fee rates for use of section from Km.195+000 to Km.272+050 of National Highway -50 Bijapur-Gulbarga-Humnabad section, are going to be revised with effect from 01.04.2026 at Kannoli Fee Plaza Km:241.100 (Taluk: Sindagi, District: Vijayapura) in the State of Karnataka:

Category of Vehicles	Fee for single Journey (in Rs.)	Fee for return Journey within a day (in Rs.)	Fee for monthly pass for 50 single Journeys in a month (in Rs.)	Fee for single Journey commercial vehicles registered within the district of plaza (in Rs.)
Car/Jeep/Van	70	105	2330	35
Light Commercial Vehicle/Light Goods Vehicle/Mini Bus	115	170	3760	55
Truck/Bus (Two Axles)	235	355	7880	120
3 Axle Commercial Vehicles	260	385	8600	130
Heavy Construction Machinery (HCM)/ Earth Moving Equipment (EME)/ MAV (4-6 Axles)	370	555	12360	185
Oversized vehicles (7 or more axles)	450	675	15050	225

* The rate for monthly pass applicable for local Non Commercial Vehicles residing within a distance of 20 kms from the Toll Plaza shall be Rs.350/-.
* The Annual Pass for the FY 2026-27 is Rs.3075/- for one year validity or 200 toll plaza crossings (Whichever is earlier) for mechanical vehicles registered for non-commercial purpose.

2) The above section was developed on EPC mode and as per provisions of Contract Agreement dated 16.01.2015 and Authority's Engineer vide letter dated 18.09.2019 certified the completed length of 220.010km (Bijapur-Gulbarga-Homnabad section) for putting on commercial operation. The above rates are applicable for a completed length of 77.050km, which comprises of the following:

Type of section	Length (Km)	Equivalent Length (Km) for which user fee is to be levied	Lane Configuration
Straight Section	77.050	77.050	Two Lane with Paved Shoulders
Bypass (costing > Rs.10.0 Cr.)	-	-	-
Structures (length > 60m)	-	-	-

3) The following concessions are available at above toll plaza:
(a) Return journey within 24 hours from time of payment for all categories of vehicles (discount 25%)
(b) 50 single journeys in a month from date of payment for all categories of vehicles (discount 33%).
(c) Local Pass at Rs.350/- per calendar month for non-commercial vehicle residing within 20km from User Fee Plaza.
(d) Commercial vehicles (excluding those plying under National Permit) registered in the district of Toll Plaza (discount 50%).
(e) The Annual Pass for the FY 2026-27 is Rs.3075/- for one year validity or 200 toll plaza crossings (Whichever is earlier) for mechanical vehicles registered for non-commercial purpose.
4) The exemption from payment of user fee is being provided as per the National Highways Fee (Determination of Rates and Collection) Rules, 2009 and subsequent Amendment Rules.
5) The vehicle, which is loaded in excess of permissible load, shall pay 10 times the applicable fee rate and remove the excess load to make use of highway.
6) After recovery of the Capital Cost of the project, the user fee leviable shall be reduced to 40% of the rates and shall be revised annually in accordance with said rules.
7) For viewing the User Fee Gazette Notification published vide S.O.3301(E) dated 16.09.2019 and approved User Fee Rates , the website"https://rajmargyatra.nhai.gov.in/" may be visited
8) For any enquiry, complaints and suggestions, please contact Shri. Naveen S., Project Director, NHAI, Project Implementation Unit, Plot No. 65, Kothari Layout, Venkatesh Nagar, Gulbarga – 585102 Mob No. 8130006072.

BUILDING A NATION, NOT JUST ROADS

Iran mediation: Why Pak's win isn't India's loss

BY INVITATION

MICHAEL KUGELMAN

MIDDLEMAN: If talks fail, Pak's moment in the spotlight will fade. But if de-escalation efforts succeed, whoever the mediator, it will be a net positive for India

Pakistan has taken centre stage in global geopolitics in recent days, having emerged as one of a small number of countries directly mediating between the US and Iran. This may come as a surprise to some observers, given that it has an alliance with Saudi Arabia, is bogged down in a conflict with Afghanistan, and has little experience interceding in complex conflicts.

But in fact, Pakistan is well-placed to play the role of mediator. It's one of the few countries to enjoy warm ties with Washington and decent relations with Tehran. Over the last year, it leveraged these relations to hold a series of high-level engagements with each capital—including last summer, during an earlier Iran-Israel conflict. This marks a remarkable change from just two years ago, when its ties with the US were shaky, and it had recently fought a brief war with Iran. In recent months, President Donald Trump and Secretary of State Marco Rubio have praised Pakistan for its knowledge about and willingness to mediate on Iran, and Iran has refrained from carrying out strikes in Pakistan during the war. These are indications of an American and Iranian comfort level with Islamabad.

Additionally, Pakistan—perhaps more than any other country outside West Asia—has serious skin in the game. It borders Iran to the east, making it especially vulnerable to conflict spillover risks. Its massive dependence on West Asian hydrocarbons has left it perilously close to running out of liquefied natural gas. Additionally, Pakistan badly wants to avoid invoking its defence pact with Riyadh as it doesn't want to be dragged into the war. For these reasons, Pakistan had a strong incentive to proactively pitch itself—publicly and privately—as a viable mediator rather than sitting back and being asked to play that role.

In contrast, New Delhi's ties with Washington, while improved in recent months, remain uncertain. Its relations with Tehran are friendly but shaky. The Chabahar port project, one of the few substantive achievements for India-Iran relations since India dramatically decreased its imports of Iranian energy, is in trouble. The US sinking of an Iranian ship that had participated in Indian naval exercises hasn't helped, either. Perhaps most importantly, India has a rapidly growing relationship with Israel. The optics and timing of PM Modi's visit to Israel, just before the start of the Iran war, likely didn't go down well in Tehran either.

Regardless of what becomes of Pakistan's mediation, Islamabad has already strengthened its global diplomatic profile. It's also earned a strategic advantage by signalling the clout it enjoys in West Asia—a region more important to Pakistan's interests than any other, given that it's the source of critical energy imports, home to several million Pakistani expatriates, and the site of some of its closest allies.

Some observers may take a zero-sum approach to India-Pakistan rivalry and argue that Pakistan's gains are India's loss. But this misrepresents the state of play. First, there's no reason to believe India has angled to be a mediator. Even if it had an interest in playing such a role, its cautious approach to diplomacy suggests it wouldn't do so unless formally requested by the warring parties. Second, Pakistan's mediation efforts may fizzle out as quickly as they picked up and not extend beyond the role of go-between that Islamabad has played to this point. Given the mistrust factor, there are good reasons to believe there won't be face-to-face talks between US and Iranian officials anytime soon. Failed talks would take Pakistan out of the global limelight.

Additionally, Pakistan's extended geopolitical moment in the sun hasn't diminished India's own global standing, including in West Asia, where—like Pakistan—India has some of its closest friends, large numbers of expatriates, and important economic stakes. Furthermore, if the region becomes less conflicted, India will play a major part in a new and emerging geoeconomic architecture spearheaded by initiatives like the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor and the I2U2 Group. It will also benefit from any future enlargement of the Abraham Accords. Pakistan, which has no formal ties with Israel and is unlikely to join the Accords anytime soon, will not.

Ultimately, India has a strong interest in the war winding down because of current concerns about deleterious conflict impacts (such as energy shortages and threats to Indian nationals in the region), but also because of future post-conflict opportunities. In this regard, efforts by Pakistan or any other mediator to move the needle toward de-escalation—an outcome admittedly difficult to achieve at the moment—would represent a net positive for India's interests. ■

Kugelman is senior fellow for South Asia at the Atlantic Council

Delhi's strategic dilemma will outlast the war. Relationships have memory

__Mohammed Soliman,__ a senior fellow at the Middle East Institute (MEI), argues that the old 'Middle East' lens no longer explains the region. The Iran war has underscored that point. __Neelam Raaj__ speaks to Soliman about his new book, 'West Asia: A New American Grand Strategy in the Middle East', and how the region is both shaping Asia and being reshaped by it

FOR THE RECORD

Your title uses 'West Asia', a term more common in India than in the West. Was this a deliberate reframing — and why does India belong in it?

The Middle East encodes a worldview in which Europe is the center and everything else is defined by its distance from it. If you begin your strategic analysis from that assumption, you will consistently misread the region because you are looking at it from the wrong direction. 'West Asia' urges that the region is being pulled by Asian economic gravity rather than the Atlantic. India belongs to West Asia as a geographic and economic fact. The Indian Ocean connects the Arabian Peninsula to the Indian subcontinent in ways that make any framework excluding India conceptually incomplete. India's trade with the UAE and Saudi Arabia is approaching what it does with the entire European Union. Over eight million Indians live and work across the Gulf. The India-UAE CEPA and IMEC are the institutional skeleton of a new geoeconomic order that brings the Middle East and South Asia together. West Asia captures this reality.

You cautioned against assuming Iran had been strategically weakened after Israel's actions post-Oct 7. Do recent events validate that warning?

They do, and I wish they didn't. Degrading Iran's proxies and striking its air defences is not the same thing as dismantling its strategic capacity. Tehran spent 40 years building asymmetric capabilities, embedding itself across multiple theatres, and developing a ballistic missile arsenal designed specifically to overwhelm layered regional air defence. What strikes can do is impose material costs. What they cannot do is resolve the underlying question of Iranian power. The habit of declaring adversaries defeated before the next move has been played is one of the most durable sources of strategic failure in this region.

You hoped for a wiser American strategy. That hasn't materialised with this war on Iran, has it?

The book argues for offshore balancing, which uses American power to maintain a favourable regional balance while redirecting its finite strategic resources toward the Indo-Pacific, where the decisive competition of this century is actually being waged. What we are watching is a direct military confrontation with Iran, carrying precisely the escalation risks the West Asia framework was designed to avoid.

It also exposes America's scale problem with munitions. Moving a THAAD battery from Korea is a reactive symptom of a stockpile crisis that this war has dramatically accelerated. And if the outcome is an entrenched regime in Tehran, one that has internationalised the war, weaponised the global economy, and ultimately survived, the uncomfortable reality is that China benefits. There is no other honest way to read it.

How will this war change the US relationship with the Gulf states?

There will be sharper questions about defence guarantees, technology access, and how far Washington is genuinely willing to go in co-piloting with Gulf allies rather than simply expecting their support. But the core reality hasn't changed: there is no credible alternative to the US as the region's ultimate security provider. Russia exposed its limits — and went further, providing targeting coordinates to Iran, a fact Gulf capitals have not missed. China benefits from the war's disruption but has no interest in a security role that would pull it out of the Indo-Pacific.

What did you make of India's approach to Iran, Israel, and the US during this conflict?

Delhi is attempting something genuinely difficult: holding three consequential relationships simultaneously, in the middle of a war, without sacrificing any of them. But the balance is becoming structurally harder to sustain. The war is producing outcomes that advantage China, distract the US from the Indo-Pacific, and deliver energy shocks to Asian economies, all of which create a strategic dilemma for Delhi that will outlast this war. And if it ends with an entrenched Tehran, Iran will not have missed India's deepening alignment with Israel or its expanding Gulf partnerships. Relationships have memory.

How did Shinzo Abe's 'Indo-Pacific' speech in Delhi influence your West Asia framework?

Abe's 2007 address to the Indian Parliament is one of the most underread documents in modern strategic history. At the precise moment Washington was consuming itself in Iraq, Abe stood in Delhi and articulated a vision in which Asia, not the Atlantic, was the center of the coming order. What's often missed is that he didn't invent the phrase "confluence of two seas". He dug deeper into older literary traditions, where the phrase originally described the meeting of the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea, and deliberately repurposed it to describe a new geopolitical reality, one centered on the maritime space surrounding Japan vis-à-vis China, and one that brought India out of the confines of Cold War geography.

'West Asia' makes the case that a similar reframing is overdue: seeing the Middle East not as a fragmented space, but as a system stretching from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean. And that India, which sat at the center of Abe's original conception, is the natural bridge between these two geographies.

The Gallipoli lesson Donald Trump would do well to remember in the Gulf

SWAMINOMICS

SWAMINATHAN S ANKLESARIA AIYAR

Can the world's greatest naval power be foiled by something as low-tech as floating mines? Right now, massive US aircraft carriers and destroyers dominate the Gulf. Iran has no comparable vessels. Yet the damage caused by Iranian drones and mines has paralysed commercial traffic in the Gulf, and the US is unable to ensure security. It has destroyed Iranian minelayers and shore batteries of drones, but that has not sufficed.

Perhaps US President Trump should have learned a lesson from World War I on asymmetric naval warfare. That would have warned him of the hazards that can hobble the greatest naval power.

Great Britain was the foremost naval power during WWI. Aircraft carriers did not exist at the time, but it had the most battleships and cruisers. The German fleet avoided a direct confrontation, staying close to home and depending on submarines to damage Allied shipping.

Winston Churchill was the First Lord of the Admiralty. The war on land was deadlocked along trench lines running from the North Sea to the Alps, and attempts to break through were futile, killing thousands of soldiers. Churchill came up with the brilliant idea of outflanking German forces by naval means.

The Ottoman Empire was part of the Central Powers Alliance led by Germany. It blocked British supplies to Russia, which was allied to Britain and France, through the Dardanelles. This was the long, narrow strait running from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean Sea. Churchill proposed using British battleships to force their way through the Dardanelles, capturing Constantinople on the way, and opening the sea route to Russia. This would be a continental-scale way of outflanking the deadlocked trenches of Europe. It would also induce neutral countries in Eastern Europe to join the Western allies.

In Feb 1915, the Allies assembled a fleet of British and French warships to bombard and disable Ottoman forts along the Dardanelles. Their naval guns were the biggest in the world and could hit targets deep in enemy territory. Initial progress was good, and the outer forts were destroyed with relative ease.

However, when Churchill's ships started moving up the Dardanelles, they encountered disaster. The narrow strait was heavily mined, as expected, and so British minesweepers cleared the way for the fleet. Despite this, British battleship HMS Irresistible struck a mine that caused severe damage, leaving it dead in the water. Despite efforts to tow her to safety, the strong currents and continued enemy fire made rescue impossible. The crew was evacuated, and the ship eventually sank. HMS Ocean attempted to assist the Irresistible, but it too struck a mine and later sank. Next, HMS Inflexible, a battle cruiser, hit a mine and sustained heavy damage. The French battleship Bouvet also sank rapidly after hitting a mine, with all lives lost.

This proved very quickly that forcing the Dardanelles was not feasible. The British were astonished that their battleships were hit even after their minesweepers had supposedly swept the area clear of mines. The Turks were releasing floating mines that went with the current from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean, so even after a minesweeper swept a clear passage, new mines floated into the same zone.

The British and allied forces then attempted to land troops on the adjacent Gallipoli peninsula. They lost the battle to the formidable Turkish commander, Mustafa Kemal, who would later become famous as Atatürk. Churchill was ousted from the Cabinet.

The story today is different in many ways, but the fundamental lesson is the same—low-tech weapons can foil a mighty navy. Iran is using not just mines but also drones, land-based missiles, and small boats loaded with explosives. The US Navy can deal with these, but not commercial shipping. According to marine data firm Kpler, at least 18 ships have been hit since the start of the war, and the US Navy has found its own resources insufficient to provide safe escort to dozens of commercial ships stranded in the Gulf.

Iran does not want to close the Straits of Hormuz totally. It wants open passage for its own exports and imports and has struck deals with friendly countries for passage on payment of tolls. So, although the US and Israel have smashed its high-tech missiles and air defences, Iran is far from knocked out.

Iran has choked the world supply of oil, refined products, natural gas, LPG, and aluminium, so the global prices of all these have spiralled. This threatens inflation across the world.

That spells trouble for Trump. His popularity ratings are already low and will fall further if prices rise. Inflation would probably mean a bad defeat for Trump's Republican Party in the mid-term Congressional elections in Nov, with the Democrats hoping to win both Houses. A hostile Congress could hobble Trump's executive power. Even after being hammered militarily and decapitated politically, Iran may yet trump Trump. ■

Iran war shows why India's defence budget needs a 21st-century upgrade

THE UNDERAGE OPTIMIST

CHETAN BHAGAT

SOFTWARE, NOT JUST SALARIES: The Indian Army should not be treated as an employment scheme. Agniveer was a step in the right direction

Think of the Indian Army — what comes to mind? Large battalions of soldiers walking in unison, guns slung over their shoulders? Tanks and cannons? Long convoys of defence vehicles? You are not wrong. This is what most armies look like, and India is no exception.

In fact, we have one of the biggest armies in the world, with approximately 1.4 million personnel in active service. Our defence spending isn't exactly low either. India's defence budget for 2025-26 stands at Rs 6.81 lakh crore ($76bn), a 9.5% increase from the previous year. Of this, roughly Rs 3.11 lakh crore goes toward salaries and operational expenses and Rs 1.6 lakh crore toward pensions, totalling Rs 4.7 lakh crore ($52bn), which means that nearly 70% of the defence budget is spent on manpower-related costs. Only about Rs 1.8 lakh crore ($20bn), or roughly one quarter of the budget, is allocated for modernisation and new equipment. And yes, from our defence budget, we pay almost as much for pensions (for personnel no longer in uniform) as we do for modernisation and procurement of new equipment.

This model of building personnel-intensive, land-warfare-heavy armed forces worked well a few decades ago. It did help us win the 1971 war, for instance, and the 1999 Kargil war. However, it isn't 1999 anymore.

Take a look at the multiple recent wars around you (I can't believe we humans are fighting so much in 2026, but that's a separate story). Whether it is the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, the US-Israel-Iran tensions (and several other countries caught in the crossfire), or even the relatively short Operation Sindoor, warfare has changed.

Wars today are about technology. Software over soldiers. Bandwidth over battalions. Not boots on the ground, but brains in the cloud. Cutting-edge tech over trenches. It's algorithms, not tanks and machine guns. It's missiles and unmanned drones controlled from thousands of miles away. National leaders can be eliminated without a single boot on the ground. A country can be dominated without deploying large land armies.

While Operation Sindoor marked a pivotal shift in India's military strategy, moving from terrestrial to aerial with the use of indigenous tech, India's military spending and structure still reflects an era when wars were fought mainly by large armies facing each other across borders.

Let's look at the defence budget split for the US, easily the mightiest defence force on the planet. First of all, the overall defence budget is about $850 billion, more than ten times that of India. While that may be an unfair comparison given differences in per capita income, the allocation of spending is instructive.

In the US, personnel costs account for about 18-25% of the defence budget. Procurement makes up 17-20%, while research and development — a separate category — receives 14-15%. Infrastructure, operations, and maintenance account for the remaining 40-43%.

In fiscal 2025, R&D alone amounted to roughly $140 billion annually, funding advanced work in artificial intelligence, hypersonic missiles, cyber warfare, and space systems. Procurement spending was around $160 billion. While nobody expects India to match these numbers, we can certainly improve the proportion of our budget devoted to R&D and the procurement of advanced technology. Right now, we are running an army that is also expected to have the responsibility of being an employment generator and running a retirement welfare system. While it sounds noble that the Army creates so many jobs and supports so many retirees, it comes at a cost — not just financially, but also in terms of keeping our forces less modernised and inadequately equipped for future warfare.

To be fair, India does face a unique challenge. We must not only prepare for remote, technology-driven conflicts but also defend two long land borders with large neighbouring countries. That may require significant personnel. However, even in defending land borders, new technology is likely more effective than simply adding more manpower.

Does this mean the defence forces may provide fewer jobs in the future? Possibly. The Agniveer scheme was an attempt to reduce the lifetime financial burden of recruitment by making employment more contractual. Yet whenever the army tries to reduce recruitment or pension liabilities, it faces massive criticism.

This needs to change. The army is not a welfare scheme. Its primary job is to protect the country. And if changing times require it to evolve, so be it. We must spend more on defence, and within that, allocate a larger share on research and acquiring new technologies for modern warfare.

India must decide whether it wants to prepare for the wars of yesterday — or the wars of tomorrow. ■

WORD DROP

BROLIGARCHY

We live in the age of Sam Altman's AI codes, Elon Musk's online rants, and Deepinder Goyal's obsession with neurohacking. Despite their distinct personalities, they all represent something common: 'broligarchy', a tongue-in-cheek term that blends 'bro' culture with oligarchy. It is used to describe a power structure dominated by a tight-knit group

of men who are often wealthy, influential, socially connected, and reinforce each other's authority. Critics argue that such ecosystems can perpetuate bias in hiring, funding and workplace culture, as deals are struck over golf games or late-night pub visits, spaces that can exclude outsiders, particularly women.

INBOX

DEEPER CONCERN

Apropos of 'Ghooskhor to Kerala...' (ATM, Mar 15), these films appear to be crafted in ways that circumvent legal red lines while still undermining the spirit of free expression. They may not provoke immediate violence, but raise a deeper concern about the broader social direction in which they nudge public discourse.

—**Bakul Dalal,** Delhi

Email your letters to the editor at *sunday.times@timesofindia.com* with 'Sunday Mailbox' in the subject line. Please mention your name and city

With all eyes on Hormuz, India's old links offer a new lens

BY INVITATION

NAVDEEP SURI

As the latest Gulf war heads into its fifth week, much of the focus has settled on Iran's de facto control of the Strait of Hormuz. The US 15-point plan demands that the Strait must be declared a free maritime corridor with guaranteed passage for all nations, while Iran insists that it retains full control over the waterway and may even levy transit fees a la the Suez Canal.

There must be a sense of déjà vu as the island that sits outside the port city of Bandar Abbas squirms in the glare of international media and braces for yet another joust amongst suitors vying for control over one of the world's most strategic maritime routes. It may also be looking wistfully towards India as it recalls its ancient ties with merchants from Gujarat and the Malabar coast and the subsequent protection provided by Bombay.

MERCHANT MAGNET: This strategic maritime route has ancient ties with Gujarat, Malabar

The Kingdom of Ormuz, as it was known, really came into its own from the 11th until the 14th century by developing trade networks that leveraged its location at the crossroads of global commerce. As a thriving, cosmopolitan port, Hormuz became a magnet for merchants from Arabia, Persia, China and especially from India. The Indians brought spices, cotton textiles, indigo dyes, rice and sugar for export to the Persian hinterland, Mesopotamia, Turkey and even to Europe through the established overland routes. Many of them chose to live permanently on the island, married locals and left an enduring imprint on language, culture, customs and cuisine. They also bought prized Persian and Arabian horses, Basra pearls, dates, dry fruits, and Chinese silks and sold these at a considerable profit in the Indian market. Contemporary accounts suggest that even after attacks by the Mongols in the 14th century forced the rulers to move to the mainland, Hormuz remained a fortified, prosperous city with diverse trading communities and bustling bazaars and warehouses.

Meanwhile, the Ottomans took Constantinople (Istanbul) in 1453 and elbowed out the Venetian and Genoese merchants to assume control of the lucrative land routes to India and China. Finding a sea route that bypassed the Ottoman hegemony had become the holy grail for European merchants in the 15th century. Vasco da Gama became the first European to land on the shores of Kozhikode (Calicut) in 1498 and quickly opened the way for Portuguese control of trade along India's west coast. By 1507, Afonso de Albuquerque had expanded into Goa, Bombay and Diu and declared himself the Portuguese Viceroy in India. He now wanted to consolidate his monopoly on trade with India by securing control of the sea lanes, and one of his first steps was to seize Hormuz and build a massive fort called Fort of Our Lady of the Conception. Soon, the Portuguese were running the show along southern Persia and the Arabian coast, levying duties on merchants and taxes on passing ships.

The British were watching this with envy. The East India Company was formed in 1600, and Captain William Hawkins was dispatched to the Court of the Mughal emperor Jehangir with a letter from King James I. He obtained a concession to establish a trading post in Surat in 1608 and encouraged by the enormous profits that they were raking in within their first few years of operations, the Company's managers started to cast their eyes on Persia as the next destination for their products. But first, they had to get rid of the Portuguese presence on Hormuz. This was accomplished in 1622, as a naval force dispatched from Surat helped the Persian emperor Shah Abbas to take control of the island. In return, the Company was allowed to set up a trading base in the port city of Bandar Abbas.

As trade grew, the Company established its first Political Resident in Bushehr and put a naval squadron under his charge in Hormuz to protect British ships, subjects and interests in southern Persia and the Gulf region. Harford Jones, as the first Political Resident in 1763, reported to the Company's Governor in Bombay. The control of the Raj over the Gulf for the next 170 years was embodied in the Viceroy of India and the Governor of Bombay, executed through Political Residents drawn from the Indian Political Service and supported by the naval presence in Hormuz and in the neighbouring island of Qeshm. This arrangement continued all the way until the 1930s, when a newly anointed Reza Shah Pahlavi started to assert Persian control over the islands.

In more recent times, almost 16% of India's foreign trade, over half of crude oil and LNG imports and two-thirds of the urea and ammonia needed for fertilisers come via the Strait of Hormuz. As we grapple with the challenges posed by Iran's restrictions on transit through the international waterway, we would do well to bear the shared connections of history in mind. ■

Suri is former ambassador to Egypt and UAE

Quick relief for businesses and households needed amid conflict: Finance ministry report

Inflation, Growth Likely To Be Hit: Economic Adviser

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Amid the backdrop of the West Asia conflict, India will need to provide immediate relief to the most affected and vulnerable businesses and households, and generate fiscal space to meet strategic and long-term needs, a finance ministry report said Saturday.

It said this would need building long-term buffers in several commodities and materials, not just energy-related ones.

"This calls for re-prioritisation of spending and targeted relief for the most affected and vulnerable businesses and households," said the preface to the monthly economic report for March authored by chief economic adviser V Anantha Nageswaran. The report said the impact of the conflict on India will be felt through four channels: (a) supply disruptions to oil, gas and fertilisers and more importantly, to exports as well, (b) higher import prices, (c) higher logistics costs (e.g., freight and insurance) and (d) a possible decline in remittances by Indians in the Gulf countries. (The slowdown in exports to Gulf countries may not be particularly consequential for overall exports.)

"Efforts should be made to leverage the fallout to redouble recent reform efforts to enhance India's competitiveness and preparedness
V ANANTHA NAGESWARAN
Chief Economic Adviser

"The combined impact across the four channels on growth, inflation, the fiscal balance, and external balances is likely to be significant," Nageswaran said.

Given the considerable impact of the conflict on India's economy, he said, efforts should be made to leverage the fallout to redouble recent reform efforts to enhance India's competitiveness and preparedness. The report said govt has undertaken a range of measures to manage supply disruptions, ensure energy availability, support trade and logistics, and maintain overall economic stability.

Vijaypat Singhania, 'The Complete Man', passes away

TNN & AGENCIES

Former Raymond chairman **Vijaypat Singhania**, a corporate titan and record-setting aviator who embodied his brand's famous tagline, 'The Complete Man', died in Mumbai on Saturday evening. He was 87. His son Gautam Singhania, the group's current chairman and managing director, announced the death on X. "With profound grief and deep sorrow, we inform the passing of Padma Bhushan Dr Vijaypat Kailashpat Singhania," he posted, describing his father as a "visionary leader, philanthropist, and an inspiring personality, whose legacy will continue to guide and inspire generations".

Singhania, a recipient of the Padma Bhushan, led Raymond as chairman for two decades till 2000. After handing over the reins of the company to Gautam, he transferred his entire 37% stake in the company to his son. The two were embroiled in legal disputes some years ago, but later settled the issues.

In 1988, he solo-piloted a microlight aircraft from London to Ahmedabad, a journey of over 9,000km. In 2005, at the age of 67, he set a world record for the highest flight in a hot air balloon, reaching an altitude of 69,852 feet—literally touching the fringe of space.

For these feats, he was also made an Honorary Air Commodore of the Indian Air Force.

India's largest wildlife overpass opens on Ranthambore stretch

Overpasses on the Ranthambore stretch of the expressway carry soil and native vegetation, so crossings feel like habitat and not concrete

AjaySingh.Ugras
@timesofindia.com

Jaipur: On the Delhi–Mumbai Expressway expressway skirting Ranthambore, engines roar. Above, a sloth bear crosses. No brakes slam. No horns blare. Two worlds keep their distance.

Engineers have carved out a rare truce: an 11.5km stretch where jungle and highway dovetail instead of collide. At its core: a 3.5km animal overpass system — five segments of roughly 500m each — paired with a 1.2km underpass dedicated solely to wildlife.

Built for about Rs 900 crore by Larsen & Toubro, the package opened recently from the Kota side, with traffic flowing towards Sawai Madhopur to New Delhi. "This is India's largest animal overpass," said Chirag Sharma, maintenance manager at L&T. Full two-way flow is expected by Sept 2026.

A lattice of crossings lets wildlife pass without stepping onto tarmac, stitching together a corridor linking Ranthambore with Ramgarh Vishdhari wildlife sanctuary, Mukundra Hills national park — all three in Rajasthan — and Madhya Pradesh's Kuno national park.

Here, the expressway briefly disappears under what looks like unbroken forest. High boundary walls keep animals off carriageway. Sound barriers blunt traffic noise. Overpasses carry soil and native vegetation so crossings feel like habitat, not concrete.

Beneath, about 1,500 LED lights guide motorists through covered sections.

Over 3,000 J&K govt schools have under 10 students

Naseer.Ganai@timesofindia.com

Srinagar: Over 3,000 govt schools in J&K have had zero or less than 10 students since 2022, education minister Sakina Itoo told the assembly on Saturday. Of the 3,192 such schools,1494 are in Jammu division and 1,698 in Kashmir, National Conference's (NC) Itoo said in a written reply to a question from BJP legislator RS Pathania.

In Jammu, Kathua district has the highest number of such schools at 508. In Kashmir, Baramulla district tops the list of such schools with 396. Srinagar has the lowest number in the Valley with 90 such schools, while Poonch has the lowest in Jammu division with 17.

The NC govt also disclosed major infrastructure gaps — 2,698 schools do not have boys' toilets, 57 lack girls' toilets, 9,078 schools have no boundary walls, and 10,896 schools lack playgrounds.

Pathania called the numbers a "big expose", arguing the data reflected a lack of public confidence in govt schools. "If people are not enrolling their children in these schools, why are they being opened," he said, alleging the schools are being run mainly to accommodate teaching staff. Naeem Akhtar, former J&K education minister of PDP, called it a "serious situation" and accused the NC govt of reducing education as an employment scheme for some teachers while neglecting the prime duty of educating students. "Govt's primary responsibility is human development. This data presents a dismal picture. It is not that there are no students. They are forced to move to private schools because of lack of facilities in govt schools and poor pedagogy," Akhtar said.

Private Schools Association of Jammu and Kashmir (PSAJK) president Baba Nazrul Islam agreed that the data reflects growing preference for private schools due to better infrastructure, accountability and faster decision-making.

Up to 15% pay cut if parents neglected: New T'gana Bill

Koride Mahesh | TNN

Hyderabad: The Revanth Reddy govt Saturday introduced the Telangana Employees Accountability and Monitoring of Parental Support Bill, 2026, in the assembly. The proposed legislation seeks to mandate salary deductions from employees—across govt and private sectors—as well as elected representatives like MLAs and MPs, if they neglect and fail to support their parents. Nominated members and elected representatives of local bodies will also come under the ambit of the new Bill.

"The objective of this Bill is to enable dependent parents to seek apportionment of up to 15% of their employees' total gross monthly salary or Rs 10,000, whichever is less to meet their basic needs in old age. This will ensure ageing parents do not face difficulties in meeting their basic needs like food, clothing, shelter and medical expenses," the govt said.

Under the proposed framework, senior citizens who are neglected by their children can file an application before the district collector, designated as the competent authority. Applicants must state the reasons for seeking apportionment, along with details of their income from all sources and their financial condition.

The collector is required to dispose of such petitions within 60 days of receipt, after hearing both the parent and the employee, and pass an order specifying the amount to be deducted.

NATIONAL HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY OF INDIA
(Ministry of Road Transport & Highways)
Government of India

Public Notice
Revision of User Fee applicable from 01.04.2026 to 31.03.2027 at Mulawad Toll Plaza from Design Km. 4.40 to Km.56.00 (NH-52)

The public are hereby informed that pursuant to Govt. of India Gazette Notification S.O No.3823 (E) dated 28.08.2023 and approval of Competent Authority, NHAI vide letter dated 23.03.2026, the Revised User fee rates at Mulawad Toll Plaza from Design Km. 4.40 to Km.56.00 shall be levied w.e.f 01.04.2026 (00:00 Hrs) for the use of 2 lane Bijapur- Hubli section from Design Km.4.40 to Km.56.00 (NH-52) in the State of Karnataka.

The Revised User Fee Rates for FY 2026-27 to be levied w.e.f 01.04.2026 (00:00 Hrs) at Mulawad Toll Plaza from Design Km 4.40 to Km. 56.00 of NH-52 is as below:

Mulawad Toll Plaza, NH-52				
USER FEE RATES- From 01.04.2026 to 31.03.2027				
Category	Fee for Single Journey	Fee for Return Journey within a day	Fee for monthly pass for 50 single journeys in a month	Fee for Commercial Vehicle registered within the District of plaza
Car/Jeep/Van/LMV	45	70	1505	25
LCV/LGV/Mini Bus	75	110	2430	35
Truck/Bus (2 Axle)	155	230	5090	75
3 Axle Commercial Vehicle	165	250	5550	85
Heavy Construction Machinery/ Earth Moving Equipment or Multi Axle Vehicle (MAV) (4-6 Axles)	240	360	7980	120
Oversized vehicles (7 or more axle)	290	435	9715	145

The rate for monthly pass applicable for local Non Commercial Vehicles residing within a distance of 20 kms from the Toll Plaza shall be Rs.350/-

2. **The following concessions are available as per the Gazette Notification at above Toll Plaza:**
   a. For Return journey within 24 hours from time of payment for all categories of vehicles the amount payable is one-half times the fee for one way journey (Discount 25%).
   b. For 50 Single journey in a month from date of payment for all categories of vehicles the Fee payable is Two-third of amount of the fee payable for fifty single journeys (Discount 33%).
   C. Fee for commercial vehicles (excluding vehicles plying under National permit) registered in the district where the fee plaza falls shall be 50% of the specified rate for that category of vehicle. (Discount 50%)
   d. A person who owns a mechanical vehicle registered for non-commercial purposes and resides within a distance of twenty kilometers from the fee plaza can avail a Monthly Pass for Rs.350 (Rupees Three Hundred and Fifty Only per month) for the year 2026-27 and is subject to revision every year as per the provisions of NH Fee Rule 2008 and its amendments thereof,
3. The list of exempted vehicles is as given in the amendment to NH Fee Rules dated 03.12.2010 vide GSR 950 E.
4. The Toll notification for this Plaza S.O No.3823 (E) dated 28.08.2023 has been published in Gazette of India.
5. For any complaints, emergency, suggestion and feedback please contact NHAI help line number 1033 or contact Office of the Project Director, NHAI PIU Bagalkot, Pawan R. Gurve, "Veerabhadreshwar Nilaya", Plot No: 15-C, Sector No: 73, 2nd Cross, Navanagar (Unit-2), Bagalkot-587103. Ph: 8130006081.

BUILDING A NATION , NOT JUST ROADS

Government of India
NATIONAL HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY OF INDIA
(Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Government of India)

PUBLIC NOTICE
ON USER FEE (TOLL) RATES AT BALENAHALLI TOLL PLAZA AT KM 397+400 APPLICABLE FROM 00.00 HRS OF 01.04.2026

The Public are hereby informed that pursuant to approval of user fee rates vide letter dated 23.03.2026 of NHAI, the user fee rates for use of section of Challakere - Hiriyur Section from Km.358.550 to Km.414.205 of NH-150A are as under w.e.f. 01.04.2026 at Balenahalli Toll Plaza (Chainage: 397+400 Km near Balenahalli village, Chitradurga District in the State of Karnataka)

Amount in Rs.

Sl. No.	Type of Vehicle	Single Journey	Return Journey	Multiple Journey Pass	Commercial Vehicle within District
1	Car, Jeep, Van or Light Motor Vehicle	105	155	3485	50
2	Light Commercial Vehicle, Light Goods Vehicle or Mini Bus	170	255	5630	85
3	Bus or Truck (2 Axle)	355	530	11800	175
4	Three Axle Commercial Vehicles	385	580	12870	195
5	Heavy Construction Machinery or Earth Moving Equipment (EME) or Multi Axle Vehicles (MAV) (Four to Six Axles)	555	835	18505	280
6	Oversized Vehicles (Seven or more Axles)	675	1015	22525	340

- The Annual Pass for the FY 2026-27 is Rs.3075/- for one year validity or 200 toll plaza crossings
- The monthly pass rate for local non-commercial personal vehicle is Rs.350/- for the year 2026-27.

2. The above section is developed under HAM (the above section is developed as per provisions of Concession Agreement dated 16.07.2018 and IE vide letter dated 11.03.2026 certified the completed length of 55.705 Km for putting on commercial operation). The above rates are applicable for a completed length of 55.705 Km, which comprises of following:

Type of section	Length (Km)	Equivalent Length (Km) for which user fee is to be levied	Lane Configuration
Straight Section	32.755	32.755	4/6-lane
Bypass (costing > Rs.10.0 Cr.	22.712	22.712	4/6-lane
Structures (length > 60m)	0.238	2.380	4/6-lane

3. The following concessions are available at above toll plaza:
   (i) Return journey within 24 hours from time of payment for all categories of vehicles (discount 25%)
   (ii) 50 single journeys in a month from date of payment for all categories of vehicles (discount-33%).
   (iii) The Annual Pass for the FY 2026-27 is Rs.3075/- for one year validity or 200 toll plaza crossings
   (iv) Pass at Rs.350/- per calendar month for non-commercial vehicle residing within 20 km from toll plaza.
   (v) Commercial vehicle (excluding those plying under National Permit) registered in the District of Toll Plaza (discount 50%).
4. The list of exempted vehicles is as given in the Amendment to Fee Rules dated 03.12.2010 vide GSR 950(E).
5. The vehicle, which is loaded in excess of permissible load, shall pay 10 times the applicable fee rate and remove the excess load to make use of highway.
6. The Capital Cost of the Project is Rupees 1825.25 crore. The capital cost is subject to variation as the activities of land acquisition, utility shifting, tree cutting, etc. are yet to be completed and the final capital cost will be separate. The user fee (toll) rates shall be reduced to 40% on recovery of capital cost.
7. For viewing the fee notification SO No. 3612 (E) dated 10.08.2023 published in the Gazette, letter of NHAI dated 20.03.2024 containing approval of rates, etc., the website **https://rajmargyatra.nhai.gov.in** may be visited.
8. For any enquiry and/or giving complaints/suggestions, please contact: Project Director, National Highways Authority of India,Project Implementation Unit, House No. 1383, Samrat Layout, Bank Colony, Behind SRE BPCL Petrol Bunk, Chitradurga 577502, Karnataka, Ph: 08194-200498 E-mail: **chi@nhai.org.**

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NATIONAL HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY OF INDIA
(Ministry of Road Transport & Highways)
Government of India

PUBLIC NOTICE ON REVISION OF USER FEE (TOLL) RATES FOR FY 2026-27 AT MUSTAPUR FEE PLAZA

The public are hereby informed that pursuant to approval of revised user fee rates by the Competent Authority of NHAI vide letter dated 23.03.2026, the user fee rates for the use of section of National Highway – 161A from Aurad to Bidar section, are going to be revised with effect from 01.04.2026 at Mustapur Fee Plaza Km.24.400 (Taluk: Aurad, District: Bidar) in the State of Karnataka:

Category of Vehicles	Fee for single journey (in Rs.)	Fee for return journey within a day (in Rs.)	Fee for monthly pass for 50 single journeys in a month (in Rs.)	Fee for single journey commercial vehicles registered within the district of plaza (in Rs.)
Car/Jeep/Van	45	65	1465	20
Light Commercial Vehicle/Light Goods Vehicle/Mini Bus	70	105	2365	35
Truck/Bus (Two Axles)	150	225	4960	75
3 Axle Commercial Vehicles	160	245	5410	80
Heavy Construction Machinery (HCM)/ Earth Moving Equipment (EME)/ MAV (4-6 Axles)	235	350	7775	115
Oversized vehicles (7 or more axles)	285	425	9465	140

- The rate for Monthly Pass applicable for local Non Commercial Vehicles residing within a distance of 20 km from the Toll Plaza shall be Rs.350/-.
- The Annual Pass for the FY 2026-27 is Rs.3075/- for one year validity or 200 toll plaza crossings (Whichever is earlier) for mechanical vehicles registered for non-commercial purpose.

2) The above section was developed on EPC mode and as per provisions of Contract Agreement dated 18.01.2021. Authority's Engineer vide letter dated 24.03.2025 certified the completed length of 45.535 km (Aurad – Bidar section) for placing in service of users and commercial operation. The above rates are applicable for a completed length of 45.535km, which comprises of the following:

Type of section	Length (Km)	Equivalent Length (Km) for which user fee is to be levied	Lane Configuration
Net Road Length (Excluding Length of Bypass and Structures)	45.21	45.21	Two Lane with Paved Shoulders
Bypass (costing > Rs.10.0 Cr.)	-	-	-
Structures (Length > 60m)	0.325	3.25	Two Lane with Paved Shoulders

3) The following concessions are available at above toll plaza:
   a) Return journey within 24 hours from time of payment for all categories of vehicles (discount 25%).
   b) 50 single journeys in a month from date of payment for all categories of vehicles (discount 33%).
   c) Local Pass at Rs.350/- per calendar month for non-commercial vehicle residing within 20km from User Fee Plaza.
   d) Commercial vehicles (excluding those plying under National Permit) registered in the district of User Fee Plaza (discount 50%).
   e) The Annual Pass for the FY 2026-27 is Rs.3075/- for one year validity or 200 toll plaza crossings (Whichever is earlier) for mechanical vehicles registered for non-commercial purpose.
4) The exemption from payment of user fee is being provided as per the National Highways Fee (Determination of Rates and Collection) Rules, 2008 and subsequent Amendment Rules.
5) The vehicle, which is loaded in excess of permissible load, shall pay 10 times the applicable fee rate and remove the excess load to make use of highway.
6) After recovery of the Capital Cost of the project, the user fee leviable shall be reduced to 40% of the rates and shall be revised annually in accordance with the said rules.
7) For viewing the User Fee Gazette Notification published vide S.O. 4818(E) dated 30.10.2024 and approved User Fee Rates, the website "https://rajmargyatra.nhai.gov.in/" may be visited.
8) For any enquiry, complaints and suggestions, please contact Shri. Naveen S., Project Director, NHAI, Project Implementation Unit, Plot No. 65, Kothari Layout, Venkatesh Nagar, Kalaburagi – 585 102 Mob No. 8130006072.

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NATIONAL HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY OF INDIA
(Ministry of Road Transport & Highways)
Government of India

PUBLIC NOTICE ON REVISION OF USER FEE (TOLL) RATES FOR FY 2026-27 AT HARVAL FEE PLAZA

The public are hereby informed that pursuant to approval of revised user fee rates by the Competent Authority of NHAI vide letter dated 23.03.2026, the user fee rates for the use of section of National Highway – 50 Bijapur-Gulbarga-Humnabad section, are going to be revised with effect from 01.04.2026 at Harval Fee Plaza Km.303.400 (Taluk: Jevargi, District: Kalaburagi) in the State of Karnataka:

Category of Vehicles	Fee for single journey (in Rs.)	Fee for return journey within a day (in Rs.)	Fee for monthly pass for 50 single journeys in a month (in Rs.)	Fee for single journey commercial vehicles registered within the district of plaza (in Rs.)
Car/Jeep/Van	90	135	2950	45
Light Commercial Vehicle/Light Goods Vehicle/Mini Bus	145	215	4765	70
Truck/Bus (Two Axles)	300	450	9980	150
3 Axle Commercial Vehicles	325	490	10890	165
Heavy Construction Machinery (HCM)/ Earth Moving Equipment (EME)/ MAV (4-6 Axles)	470	705	15655	235
Oversized vehicles (7 or more axles)	570	855	19055	285

- The rate for Monthly Pass applicable for local Non Commercial Vehicles residing within a distance of 20 km from the Toll Plaza shall be Rs.350/-.
- The Annual Pass for the FY 2026-27 is Rs.3075/- for one year validity or 200 toll plaza crossings (Whichever is earlier) for mechanical vehicles registered for non-commercial purpose.

2) The above section was developed on EPC mode and as per provisions of Contract Agreement dated 16.01.2015. Authority's Engineer vide letter dated 18.09.2019 certified the completed length of 220.010km (Bijapur-Gulbarga-Homnabad section) for putting on commercial operation. The above rates are applicable for a completed length of 79.2548km, which comprises of the following:

Type of section	Length (Km)	Equivalent Length (Km) for which user fee is to be levied	Lane Configuration
Straight Section	61.045	61.045	Two Lane with Paved Shoulders
	12.420	12.420	Four Lane section
Bypass (costing > Rs. 10.0 Cr.	4.95	4.95	Two Lane with Paved Shoulders
Structures (length > 60m)	0.8398	8.398	Two Lane with Paved Shoulders

3) The following concessions are available at above toll plaza:
   a) Return journey within 24 hours from time of payment for all categories of vehicles (discount 25%).
   b) 50 single journeys in a month from date of payment for all categories of vehicles (discount 33%).
   c) Local Pass at Rs.350/- per calendar month for non-commercial vehicle residing within 20km from User Fee Plaza.
   d) Commercial vehicles (excluding those plying under National Permit) registered in the district of User Fee Plaza (discount 50%).
   e) The Annual Pass for the FY 2026-27 is Rs.3075/- for one year validity or 200 toll plaza crossings (Whichever is earlier) for mechanical vehicles registered for non-commercial purpose.
4) The exemption from payment of user fee is being provided as per the National Highways Fee (Determination of Rates and Collection) Rules, 2008 and subsequent Amendment Rules.
5) The vehicle, which is loaded in excess of permissible load, shall pay 10 times the applicable fee rate and remove the excess load to make use of highway.
6) After recovery of the Capital Cost of the project, the user fee leviable shall be reduced to 40% of the rates and shall be revised annually in accordance with the said rules.
7) For viewing the User Fee Gazette Notification published vide S.O. 3301(E) dated 16.09.2019 and approved User Fee Rates, the website "https://rajmargyatra.nhai.gov.in/" may be visited.
8) For any enquiry, complaints and suggestions, please contact Shri. Naveen S., Project Director, NHAI, Project Implementation Unit, Plot No. 65, Kothari Layout, Venkatesh Nagar, Kalaburagi – 585 102 Mob No. 8130006072.

BUILDING A NATION, NOT JUST ROADS

'Do we go back to begging or sex work?' Trans bill sparks fear, fury

Transgenders across country speak of betrayal and anxiety as hard-won recognition appears to slip away

Shruti.Sonal@timesofindia.com

Nearly four years ago, Ahmedabad's Kshama Bindu made national headlines. Dressed in a traditional red lehenga, she resembled a picture-perfect bride. But there was a twist: she was marrying herself in India's first case of sologamy, in an attempt to break free from gender norms and patriarchy.

A lot has changed for Bindu, who now goes bythe name Mukunde and identifies as a trans-masculine person. After years of suppressing his masculinity, he had recently decided to embrace it by finally gathering the courage to undergo hormone replacement therapy, and lining up plans to change his gender to male on his identity documents. All of that has come to a screeching halt with the passage of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026 in Parliament.

"I have not been able to sleep for days. There's so much fear…it feels like an existential threat," 28-year-old Mukunde says.

Mukunde is one of the many trans persons across the country who now face an uncertain future, struggling to make sense of the changes that loom over their lives with little or no support from their families or friends. The new amendments to the Bill propose stricter procedures for gender recognition. A key change is the shift away from self-identification, which had been recognised by the Supreme Court in the 2014 NALSA judgment. Instead, the amendments introduce mandatory medical verification through state-appointed boards, increasing bureaucratic and medical scrutiny. The Bill also redefines who qualifies as 'transgender', narrowing the scope to a biological construct and potentially excluding people based on self-perceived identity or sexual orientation, including those who identify as non-binary.

For Anil/Savithri, a non-binary transgender person from Hyderabad, the news has come as a shock. "It's been over seven years since I ran away from my abusive family to live with no support or social acceptance. I faced a lot of hate," they say. The ability to legally self-identify as a non-binary person became a source of support, often protecting them against discrimination in workplaces. The desire to offer the sense of community that they never had also led Anil/Savithri to start the Mobbera Foundation, which works for the LGBTQIA+ community in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. These efforts seem to be in jeopardy now. "I am afraid my family might mock me for abandoning home and fighting for my identity. Workplaces also might become hesitant to employ trans or non-binary men. Do we go back to begging or sex work then?" they question.

MEDICAL MISADVENTURES

Mukunde says the mandatory medical verification is like being "stripped naked". "I have spent years tackling body dysmorphia. There were days I'd go to office wearing a saree and feel suffocated all day. It took me a long time to get comfortable in my own skin, and I'm afraid I have to face that all over again," he shares.

Gagan/Gaadha, a trans, non-binary therapist from Hyderabad, says the amendments have defeated the long years of challenging their own family and society. It is not just about the invasion of privacy, but also the lack of sensitivity and awareness in medical boards. "I talked to more than 30 doctors while working with an NGO in Bhopal in an attempt to make the medical curriculum more gender-inclusive. None of them understood the distinctions between gender and sexuality," they say.

Other activists have also long pointed out how Indian medical textbooks often contain harmful content towards the queer and trans community. Extensive work done by SAATHII, a Tamil Nadu-based NGO, for instance, has shown that for undergraduate students studying forensic medicine in India, the medical curriculum describes 'sodomy', 'lesbianism' and oral sex as sexual offences, and 'transvestism' (cross-dressing) as a 'sexual perversion'.

"If doctors don't have basic understanding, what will they know about my reality? With what faith do I go to them? How will they understand what goes through our heads, how we feel, what lives we have lived, and what experiences we've been through?" asks Gagan/Gaadha.

FEARS OF INVISIBILISATION

Activists have also pointed out that some provisions in the amendment introduce punitive measures related to 'forcing' transgender identity and expand state oversight in certification processes. This has led to a sense of fear among activists, doctors, friends, and therapists.

Gagan/Gaadha asks, "Am I a criminal now because I'm a certified queer affirmative counselling practitioner?" Their source of livelihood is not the only cause of concern. They hold a transgender identity card, which allows them to avail a junior research fellowship through a reservation. However, they have not undergone any medical or hormonal transitions yet. "I want to live as a trans person. I want to pursue my education as a trans person. And I won't be able to do that now," they add.

Focus on specific communities, including the hijra, kinnar, and aravani, has also led to fears of invisibilisation among individuals who do not belong to any of these. Sakshi Jain, a 23-year-old trans lawyer from Jammu, says, "I am not a member of the Hijra community or intersex. If this Bill becomes an Act, will I not remain a citizen?" Jain, who is the first trans law graduate from West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences, describes this as a moment of reckoning for the legal system. "I studied law because of the struggles I had faced with my identity. I continue to face a lot of discrimination, but have the confidence of taking a stand for myself and others," they say. While Jain comes from a 'privileged' family and has supportive parents, their story is not devoid of instances that depict how public spaces continue to discriminate against transpersons. Jain was forced to live in the boys' hostel for three years, thrown out of their rented accommodation when the landlord saw 'trans' written on the Aadhar card, and dismissed as a "liability" in dozens of job interviews.

REALITY CHECK

Community members question the govt's argument that the amendments will help fight 'false cases'. "We are living in a country where transgender persons are treated very badly. Who would want to push themselves into this kind of trauma by falsely saying they are a transgender person?" asks Anil/Savithri.

Data shows that uptake of govt identity cards — crucial for accessing social benefits — remains low among the transgender community. Of the 487,803 transgender persons recorded in the last Census, so far only about 32,500 have govt IDs. Only Karnataka has implemented a 1% horizontal reservation for transgender persons across civil services. While the Bill could be challenged in court, the "U-turn" on NALSA shows how easily and suddenly hard-fought rights can be taken back, says Jain. "While NALSA had its own set of flaws, it gave me a sense of faith in the legal system. Today, I feel betrayed as a citizen and a voter. I would call it an assault on my right to live with dignity, and my personhood."

GUIDE TO GENDER IDENTITY TERMS

Transgender: Umbrella term for people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth

Transsexual: Those who seek to change their bodies through hormone therapy/ other medical interventions

Intersex: Born with biological sex characteristics that don't fit binary definitions of male/female

Non-binary: Focuses more on fluid gender identity. Many consider themselves transgender, but not all

Watching rajma reels & dancing global garba

Mrs. Funnybones

TWINKLE KHANNA

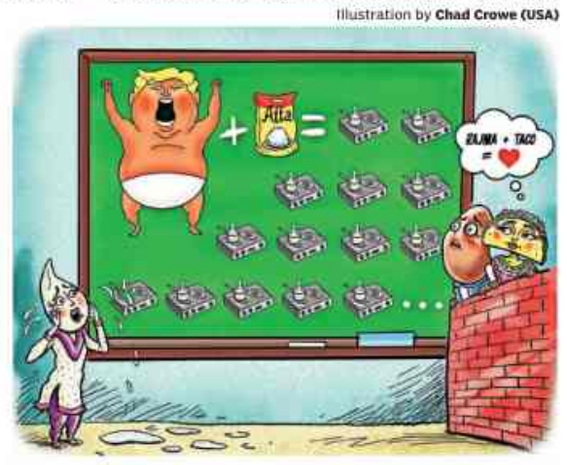
8am Donald Trump has entered our kitchens. Thanks to one orange man, a nation of 1.4 billion brown people is frantically buying induction stoves. I have joined my fellow citizens and am trying to order three. But the dealer tells me that they have run out of the 1600-watt ones and the 1800-watt ones haven't arrived. Watt is this nonsense?

10am I have just downed a glass of fennel water. Now that I have hit half a century, I have started following a bunch of longevity experts on YouTube. I lunge, squat, research supplements, and every Sunday, segregate these 124-odd pills into my pillbox for the week. I drink vile juices, eat soaked methi seeds, soaked walnuts, and soaked almonds. It's a miracle that I leave my soaked laundry alone. Sometimes, I think I am dedicating such a large chunk of my life to increasing my lifespan that the net result will be zero.

11am I chance upon a recent video of Trump sitting opposite the Japanese prime minister and making a Pearl Harbour joke. In previous administrations, diplomacy was alive and kicking, now it seems as if Trump has deported it. Meanwhile, I must hand it to our prime minister. He is backslapping Putin, commiserating with Iran, nodding along with Israel, hugging Trump and bridging the gulf with the Gulf via phone chats. This is called global garba. Only Gujaratis know how to circle around in a group without stepping on anyone's toes.

12.30pm Gen Z never fails to surprise me. The young girls in the office inform me that the newest way they are committing brain rot is by watching AI-generated videos of lentils, fruits and vegetables. I am shown one. Rajma, depicted as an oval, brown animated creature, falls in love with Chawal. She is rounder, feminine in appearance, and is thrilled. Then Rajma gets an overseas job, moves to Mexico, where he falls in love with Taco. There is a part two, but I feel 35% of my frontal lobe has stopped functioning and I may soon lose the rest, so I politely decline.

Illustration by **Chad Crowe (USA)**



I have joined my fellow citizens and am trying to order three induction stoves. But the dealer says they are out of the 1600-watt ones and the 1800-watt ones haven't arrived. Watt is this nonsense?

12.35pm Because I have seen the Rajma Chawal reel, the algorithm drags me to recipes, then to a woman confidently explaining that 1+1 is not 2, and finally to Salma Hayek on a talk show. She says that Trump had once asked her out and she rebuffed him. It makes me wonder if his obsession with building the US-Mexico border wall started before or after her refusal. One could say, he didn't 'Taco' the rejection well. Also, a pun a day may keep the doctor away, but two bad puns in one column are probably signs of cognitive decline. My supplement stack is clearly not working.

2pm Picking at my boring lunch of salad and grilled paneer, I have an epiphany. Trump reportedly survives on Diet Coke and fried chicken, seldom exercises and at 79 still has the energy of a young orangutan as he orchestrates military campaigns, offends the Japanese and crashes global markets. I am clearly following the wrong longevity experts.

5.30pm At the salon, I contemplate getting a French bob because if I can't control my portfolio, at least I can control my hair. I send a reference photo to a friend who replies, 'You will look like a cracked person.' When I relay this to a common friend getting a blow-dry beside me, she dismisses him with, 'Why are you asking him? He looks like Epstein's uncle.' In all the ways one can be linked to an international scandal, this is probably the most original.

8pm Along with keeping track of my calories, I am tracking gold and oil prices. My resting heart rate has risen to match the dollar. 93 beats per minute. Once the dollar crosses 100, I will have to go in for an angioplasty.

In the midst of my woes, the man of the house asks about dinner. I realise that I have forgotten to ask the cook to make anything. 'Have a sandwich,' I tell him, 'There is no rajma chawal today. Rajma has left Chawal for Taco.'

'What?'

'Yes, I have seen it myself,' I say. 'Also, I have stopped trusting math. Oil prices go up and the dollar instead of dropping, goes up further. 1+1 is not equal to 2.'

'Of course it is,' he says.

'No. If I take one lump of atta and add another lump of atta to it, I don't get two lumps. Just one big lump of atta. So 1+1=1.'

He says, 'So along with rajma chawal, you saw a big lump of atta.'

'No. With Rajma Chawal, I saw Taco. The atta is a different mathematical interpretation.'

'You are such a pukkao,' he says. 'We don't need those induction stoves. We can just replace the gas cylinders with you.'

INQUIZITIVE

by **JOY BHATTACHARJYA**

1 The favourite pet of the former Queen of England, Elizabeth II was the Dorgi. The Dorgi is a cross between a Dachshund and which other dog?

2 Two of the largest rivers to flow through India actually meet in another country. Name the rivers and the country.

3 If the G in the abbreviation LPG stand for 'gas,' what does the letter 'L' stand for?

4 If the number 13 is often considered unlucky in India, with some buildings and hotels skipping it altogether, which single digit number is considered unlucky in China as it sounds similar to their word for death?

5 Which fictional film character, a megalomaniac dictator who was a retired army general, was created by Salim and Javed in their last official partnership in 1987?

6 _____ don't do one thing but make music for us to enjoy. They don't eat up people's gardens, don't nest in corncribs, they don't do one thing but sing their hearts out for us. That's why it's a sin _____. The first word is the name of an living creature, and the last four words form the title of a famous novel, ending with the first word. Name the novel.

7 The mortarboard is one of the names of a type of headwear consisting of a horizontal square board fixed upon a skull-cap, with a tassel attached to the centre. When is this headwear usually worn?

8 Which unit of currency gets its name from a Dutch word meaning 'ridge' and often features the Big Five animals of African safaris on its notes?

9 What connects the logos of the Oakland Athletics Baseball team till 1982, the Ivory Coast football team, the Kerala Blasters and now the Lucknow Super Giants?

10 Which bag shaped as a large cylindrical holdall, often used for gyms, gets its name from a town in Belgium where the thick, coarse, woollen cloth used to make the original bags was produced?

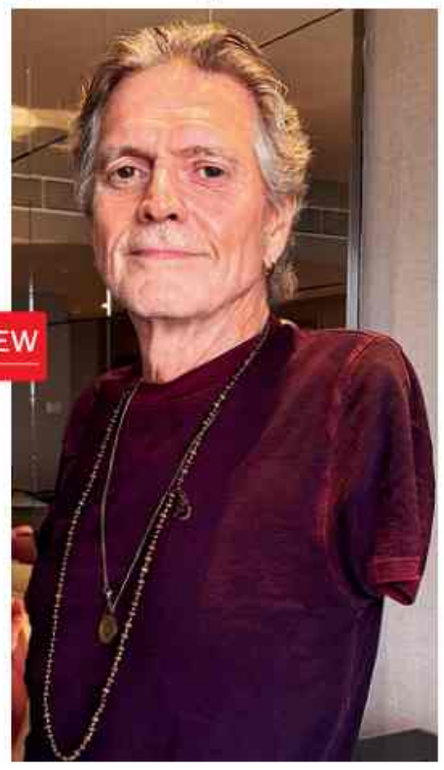
ANSWERS

1 | The Corgi
2 | Ganga and Brahmaputra meet in Bangladesh near Goalundo Ghat to form the Padma
3 | Liquefied
4 | 4. Even the 14th floor is often skipped
5 | Mogambo
6 | To Kill a Mockingbird
7 | For graduation ceremonies, also called a graduate cap or an Oxford cap
8 | The Rand, from South Africa
9 | They feature an elephant in their logo
10 | Duffel

Still rocking, still evolving: Rick Allen on 49 yrs of Def Leppard

At 62, Rick Allen is still living one of rock's most improbable second acts. In India for Brit rock band Def Leppard's first headline tour, the drummer — who returned to the stage after a near-fatal accident cost him an arm — is finally playing to an audience that grew up with the band's songs. Allen spoke to ***Mohua Das*** *about why arriving in India feels "like coming full circle" and finding new generations of listeners*

INTERVIEW



■ Welcome to India. Were you aware of the kind of following you have here?

Yeah, there was a tour cancellation back in 2008, which was such a disappointment to us. We hope that India will become a place we can keep coming back to like it's just normal, instead of all this anticipation that's built up over so many years. But the response so far — especially the audience in Shillong — was one of the best we've ever played to. They all knew the words. It was such a compliment. We were somewhat aware of the following, but you don't realise that until you're actually in it. Growing up in England, I was exposed to a lot of different cultures and I was around a lot of Indian people. It almost feels like coming full circle…from growing up experiencing different cultures in my own country, to then going out and feeling like the minority in other countries. It's great.

■ Your return to drumming within two years of the accident couldn't have been straightforward...

It's very complex. For me, it was the power of the human spirit that got me to a certain level but it was also guilt, letting other people down. Seeing my parents so sad and depressed even when I was suffering myself. So it's not all about the good, it's not all about the bad…it's recognising all the different ingredients that go into making something whole, like a wonderful 'dal'. It's not just the lentils, it's everything that goes into it. Now I'm at an age where I can maintain a certain level of contentment. I'm a work in progress. But for now, I'm in a good place.

■ The band held off from putting its catalogue on streaming platforms for a long time. Why did you, and what changed when you finally made that move in 2018?

We felt streaming platforms tended to devalue music. There's always been this tension between the business end of music and actually being a musician. Back in the days of vinyl, before computer companies went to record companies and said, 'We can clone music,' they didn't really push back, and that was a fatal mistake. People began to expect music for free, even though it takes time and effort to create. We saw it like walking into a museum, taking a painting off the wall, and saying, 'Well, it's mine now.' So we held off as long as we could to preserve some value in the music. But at a certain point, it became like a tidal wave. If you didn't get involved, your music wouldn't reach as many people. That's the positive. More people get to hear the music. But if the disparity between how artistes were paid then and now came more into line, it would be fairer. It's disheartening when new musicians can't make money from their own work. Their music becomes a calling card to get people to shows, with revenue coming from tickets and merchandise.

■ Your music is now also finding new life through reels, and TikTok trends. What has it been like connecting with this generation of listeners?

It's the evolution of how people listen to music. When we play live, you'll see parents our age with kids who weren't even born when our first record came out. When I meet the kids, I'll say, 'I hope your parents didn't force you to listen to our music!' and they'll say, 'No, we really love it.' It's great bringing that new energy on board. Our music and our concerts are like a family event. No f-words!

■ There are a lot of myths and cliches around 'rock gods'. Is there something you'd like to set straight?

It's funny that we actually like being made fun of, and I think that shows maturity. There's a movie called 'This is Spinal Tap', a spoof on the rock industry, and some of the things they make fun of, I've actually seen people behave that way. That kind of entitlement, being too much of a rock star, too full of yourself... I think with maturity comes reality. We're human beings. We make good music, we make people happy, and that's the most important thing.

■ Rock isn't at the centre of pop culture the way it once was. What do you think it needs to keep it moving forward?

I think collaborations are really important. There was a moment when you saw Aerosmith collaborate with hip-hop group Run-DMC on 'Walk This Way', and it became something more than just a rock song. It reached a wider audience. It's the same with what we did with Taylor Swift (in 2008 on a TV show that pairs country music artists with musicians from other genres). It's important to reinvent and present something familiar in a different way. And suddenly, you have a whole new audience.

■ It's legendary that the band's 'victory meal' on every tour is always an Indian curry. How did that come to be and has being here elevated it?

It's true! I just had a wonderful masala dosa this morning for breakfast, and I'm really going to miss it when I go home. We all grew up in England, and Bradford has one of the largest Indian populations outside of India. So it was normal for us — the culture, the food. You'd walk down the street, buy barfi, and all the Indian goodies, it just became part of us. So now, it's natural for us to just enjoy a really good Indian meal.

Finding The Calm Before The Chords Collide

Ashwin Srisailam

The tulsi mala that Rick Allen has been wearing around his neck through Friday morning ahead of his Mumbai show didn't feel out of place on the ace drummer. For him, it wasn't just another good luck token picked up en route to a desi welcome. In hindsight, it carries the weight of a longer story of his enduring affair with India and its ancient wisdom.

One that began over two decades ago, when he first came to India in the years after his accident in 1984 that forced him to rebuild his skills, and sense of self. But the comeback "from within" he says, was still catching up. "I felt as though there was something still missing," he says. It was during a chance trip to India with his wife that he stumbled upon Ashwin Srisailam, a Chennai-born former monk with whom he would go on to work for over two decades, and who has shaped how Allen approaches life on and off stage.

It wasn't love at first visit. What stayed, though, was how he made sense of it all. "Through the trauma and suffering I'd been through, it gave me an advantage on the upside. Because of my gratitude, I was able to tap into seeing the good in people."

By his fourth visit, he was ready to relocate, at least in spirit. "I told Ashwin... 'I don't want to leave. I want a donkey, a moped and a goat'." But Srisailam offered him a reality check. "Rick, it is not your path."

For Srisailam, whose own journey is unusual enough, the work is less about religion or spirituality but awareness. "I was a monk for 19 years from age 13," he says. "The whole philosophy revolves around your inner being, physical body, and mind." He then co-founded a tech-led mind fitness platform Ahhaa, with US-based Diane Bacchus, which is now used by corporates and creatives alike.

On tour with Def Leppard, he describes his work as "an anchor sitting with them where they go into that nice place of calm and visualise the crowd that's coming to listen to them."

It's not the kind of ritual one associates with the adrenaline and excess of rock. "They know clearly that for them to go full hard on the stage, they need that deep, calm inner space," he says. What happens in that hour is also about grounding. "The awareness that people take their time, money and energy to come...so this is the time for the band to give back as energy."

BRIC a DBT Organization

DEPARTMENT OF BIOTECHNOLOGY
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

RCB

PhD Programme Admissions to iBRIC+ (BRIC, RCB and ICGEB)

Biotechnology Research and Innovation Council (BRIC), New Delhi, is an autonomous body of the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Govt. of India (GoI), consisting of 13 institutes, namely:

1) National Institute of Immunology (BRIC-NII), New Delhi
2) National Centre for Cell Science (BRIC-NCCS), Pune
3) Institute of Life Sciences (BRIC-ILS), Bhubaneswar
4) Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Biotechnology (BRIC-RGCB), Thiruvananthapuram
5) Centre for DNA Fingerprinting and Diagnostics(BRIC-CDFD), Hyderabad
6) National Brain Research Centre (BRIC-NBRC), Manesar
7) National Institute of Plant Genome Research (BRIC-NIPGR), New Delhi
8) Institute of Bioresources and Sustainable Development (BRIC-IBSD), Imphal
9) Institute for Stem Cell Science and Regenerative Medicine (BRIC-InStem), Bengaluru
10) National Institute of Biomedical Genomics (BRIC-NIBMG), Kalyani
11) Translational Health Science and Technology Institute(BRIC-THSTI), Faridabad
12) National Agri-food and Biomanufacturing Institute (BRIC-NABI), Mohali
13) National Institute of Animal Biotechnology (BRIC-NIAB), Hyderabad

The two other DBT-supported institutions are:

14) International Centre for Genetic Engineering & Biotechnology (ICGEB), New Delhi
15) Regional Centre for Biotechnology (RCB), Faridabad

ICGEB is an international intergovernmental organisation with 69 member states, dedicated to advancing biotechnology research and capacity-building for developing nations; the New Delhi component is supported by the Government of India.

RCB is an Institution of National Importance, created by an Act of Parliament, established by DBT under the auspices of UNESCO. Together, BRIC, RCB and ICGEB are referred to as **iBRIC+**, for which RCB awards academic degrees.

Online applications are invited from Indian students for admission to iBRIC+ for the following PhD programmes* starting August 2026 (Monsoon Semester):

i3c BRIC-RCB PhD Programme in Biosciences 2026-27 (common iBRIC+ PhD Programme)	**iBRIC+ PhD Programmes 2026-27 (individual iBRIC+ PhD programmes)**
Features: One semester common course work at RCB, followed by 3-month field immersion programme and PhD research at the allotted individual iBRIC+ on inter-institutional, team science projects.	**Features:** Coursework, followed by 3-month field immersion programme and PhD research at the individual iBRIC+ where the candidate is selected.
Eligibility: ***Track I :*** (a) Master's degree/4-year Bachelor's degree from a recognised institution in any area of science and technology, or M.VSc., or a Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery, or an equivalent degree. (b) Must hold a 5-year valid national Government (GoI) fellowship**. **Track II :** Medicine (MBBS) undergraduates or 4-year undergraduates (BTech/BE) in any branch of engineering (non-biological sciences).	**Eligibility:** (a)Master's degree/4-year Bachelor's degree from a recognised institution in any area of science and technology, or M. VSc., or a Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery, or an equivalent degree.(b) Must hold a 5-year valid national Government (GoI) fellowship**.
For details, application deadlines and queries, visit the weblink: **https://www.rcb.res.in**	For details, application deadlines and queries, visit the weblink: individual iBRIC+ websites or **https://www.bric.nic.in/Phd_admission_2026**

Candidates may apply for either or both the programmes after ascertaining eligibility.
***Candidates who have previously activated any GoI PhD Fellowship are ineligible to apply.*

CHITTARANJAN NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE
(An Autonomous Institute under Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India)
1st Campus – 37, S. P. Mukherjee Road, Kolkata - 700 026
2nd Campus - Street No.299, Plot No. DJ – 01, Premises No. 02-0321, Action Area 1D, New Town, Kolkata – 700160

Date: 26th March, 2026

Advt. No. : R-004/2026, Dated 16.01.2026

CORRIGENDUM

In partial modification of the advertisement for recruitment to various posts, it is hereby notified that the following posts stand **withdrawn** :

1. **01 Post of Specialist Grade – I (Medical Oncology)**
2. **01 Post of Specialist Grade – II (Breast & Soft Tissue Oncology)**
3. **01 Post of Specialist Grade – II (Medical Oncology)**
4. **01 Post of Principal (Nursing) / Nursing Superintendent**

Accordingly, the applications submitted for the above-mentioned posts shall not be processed further.

No queries in this regard will be entertained.

Refund of Application Fees :

All applicants who have applied for the above withdrawn posts are eligible for a refund of the application fee.

Applicants are required to submit their bank account details (including Name of Account Holder, Bank Name, Account Number, IFSC Code, and a copy of cancelled cheque/passbook) via email for processing the refund.

- **Email ID : recruitment.cncik2@gmail.com**
- **Subject Line :** *Application Fee Refund – [Post Name]*
- **Time Limit :** Within **30 days** from the date of publication of this corrigendum.

No requests for refund shall be entertained after the stipulated period.

Director, CNCI

PUBLIC NOTICE

The general public are hereby informed that my client has entered into an agreement for purchase of the Immovable Property described in the Schedule hereunder from its owners **SRI. S. KISHAN KUMAR**, Son of D. Shanthilal and **SMT. PANNA K**, Wife of Sri. S. Kishan Kumar, both are residing at No.E-401, Jarcnada Block, Brigade Millennium, J.P. Nagar, 7th Phase, Bengaluru-560078. Any person/s having any claim/rights/interest over the Schedule Property or any objections for said sale of the property, may file their objections in writing, along with supporting documents viz. Agreements, JDA, GPA, MOU & other contract agreements, addressed to the undersigned **within 7 days** from the date of publication of this Notice, failing which, it shall be construed that there are no claims of any sort over the said property and my client shall be advised to proceed with the purchase.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

ALL THAT Piece & Parcel of Immovable Commercial Property bearing **E Asthi No.8197211802, BBMP Khata No.153/152/161/93/1, 2,** Property No.93/1 (converted land bearing Sy.93/1, House List No.93/1) and No.93/2 (converted land bearing Sy.93/2, House List No.93/2), situated at **SINGASANDRA VILLAGE, BEGUR HOBLI, HONGASANDRA GRAMA PANCHAYATH, Bengaluru South Taluk, Bengaluru,** now comes under the purview of BBMP Ward No.191-Singasandra, measuring **EAST to WEST 187.9 + 163.9/2 FEET and NORTH to SOUTH 99.75 + 103.75 / 2 FEET, in all totally measuring 17,226 square feet,** including passage, parking area and setbacks and comprises of commercial building consisting Ground Floor 10,000 square feet built up area, First Floor 10,000 square feet built up area, Second Floor 10,000 square feet built up area and Third Floor 10,000 square feet built up area and bounded on the:

East by : Vacant Land;
West by : Road,
North by : Property of Purushotham Reddy,
South by : Vacant Land.

Mr. K.B. THIPPE SWAMY, Advocate
No.22, L.S No.25, First Floor, SSB
Mattada Complex, Tank Bund Road,
Bengaluru-560 009.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Our client ('Client') is desirous of entering into a sale transaction in connection with the immovable properties measuring 8.31 Acres, more fully described in the 'Schedule' hereunder and hereinafter collectively referred to as the '**Schedule Properties**' with **K.S. Subbiah Pillai & Co. (India) Private Limited**, having its registered office at No.8 (Old No.2), First Floor, Rajakrishnan Street, T. Nagar, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India - 600 017 ('**Owner**'). The Owner has represented to our Client that it is the absolute owner of the Schedule Properties, with unrestricted rights of alienation over the same.

Notice is hereby given to the general public that any person/s other than the Owner, asserting any right, title, charge, lien, claim/s or any interest whatsoever in respect of the Schedule Properties is/ are hereby called upon to submit to the undersigned, their claim/s, if any, over the Schedule Properties or their objections, if any, to the transaction. The said claim/s or objections must be in writing, together with documentary proof of such claim/s or objections, so as to reach us at the address given below within a period of **10 (ten) days** from the date of publication of this Notice. If no such claims or objections are received within the said period of 10 (ten) days, it shall be deemed that no one else other than the Owner has/ have any right, title, charge, lien, claim/s or any interest whatsoever in respect of the Schedule Properties. Further any claims or alleged interests, if any, which are not received within the said period of 10 (ten) days shall be/are deemed to have been consciously waived and disregarded for all intents and purposes and shall thereafter not be binding on our Client and our Client would be at liberty to proceed with the sale transaction in connection with the Schedule Properties.

SCHEDULE

(Description of the Schedule Properties)

Sl. No.	Description	Sale Deed & Conversion details
1.	All that piece and parcel of immovable property being a portion of property bearing Survey No. 48/3, measuring 7 Acres 38.00 Guntas (from and out of 9 Acres 29.25 Guntas) situated at Hongasandra Village, Begur Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, Bangalore Urban District and bounded on the: East by : Kudlu village boundary; West by : Bangalore-Hosur Road and remaining portion of Survey No. 48/3; North by : Property bearing Survey No. 48/4C; and South by : Property bearing Survey No. 48/2.	**K.S. Subbiah Pillai & Co. (India) Private Limited** had purchased the property under a Sale Deed dated 03.07.1989 (Registered as Document No 17(0/1989-90) from Mr. Venkatarama Setty & others. The property has been converted for commercial purposes under an Official Memorandum dated 26.11.2012 bearing No. ALN(SR)[B-4]SR.72/2012-13 issued by the Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore District.
2.	All that piece and parcel of immovable property bearing Survey No. 201/2 measuring 10.20 Guntas, situated at Kudlu Village, Sarjapura Hobli, Anekal Taluk and Bangalore Urban District and bounded on the: East by : Remaining portion of property bearing Survey No. 201/2; West by : Hongasandra Village boundary and property bearing Survey No. 48/3 of Hongasandra; North by : Remaining portion of property bearing Survey No. 201/2; and South by : Remaining portion of property bearing Survey No. 201/2.	**K.S. Subbiah Pillai & Co. (India) Private Limited** had purchased the property under a Sale Deed dated 25.07.2012 (Registered as Document No 2416/2012-13) from Mr. Sarla Rama Rao. The property has been converted for industrial purpose under an Official Memorandum dated 17.07.2012 bearing No. ALN[A][3.H]SR.106/2012-13 issued by the Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore District.

Date: 21.03.2026
Place: Bengaluru

Ms. Brijita Prakash, Partner
J. Sagar Associates
Advocates & Solicitors
18th Floor, SKAV 909, No. 91, Residency Road, Richmond Circle
Bengaluru – 560 025.
Ph. 080-4350 3600/080-4350 3615, Email – brijita.prakash@jsalaw.com

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
NATIONAL HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY OF INDIA
(Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Government of India)
Project Implementation Unit, Dharwad

PUBLIC NOTICE ON USER FEE (TOLL) RATES AT NALAWADI TOLL PLAZA APPLICABLE FROM 01.04.2026 to 31.03.2027

The public are hereby informed that pursuant to approval of user fee rates vide letter dated 26.03.2026 of NHAI, the User fee rates for use of section from Km. 128.850 to Km. 272.571 (Hubli to Hospet section) of NH-63 are going to be as under w.ef. 00.00 hrs. of 01.04.2026 at Nalawadi Toll Plaza (Chainage: 161.200 Km., Near Nalawadi Village, Dharwad District) in the State of Karnataka.

Amount in Rs.

Category of Vehicles	Fee for single Journey (in Rupees)	Fee for return journey within a day twenty four hours from the time of payment) (in Rupees)	Fee for monthly pass for 50 single journeys in a month (once month from the date of payment (in Rupees)	Fee for commercial vehicles registered within district of Plaza
Car/Jeep/Van or Light Motor Vehicle	130	195	4325	65
Light Commercial Vehicle/ Light Goods Vehicle or Mini Bus	210	315	6990	105
Truck or Bus (2 Axle)	440	660	14640	220
3 Axle Commercial Vehicle	480	720	15970	240
Heavy Construction Machinery (HCM) or Earth Moving Equipment or Multi Axle Vehicle (4 to 6 axles)	690	1035	22960	345
Oversized Vehicle (7 or more Axles)	840	1260	27950	420

The rate for monthly pass applicable for local non-commercial vehicle residing within a distance of 20 km from the toll plaza shall be **Rs.350.00**

2. The above section was developed as per provisions of Contract Agreement dated 29.08.2016 on EPC mode and Authority Engineer vide letter dated 10.03.2022 certified the completed length of 134.620 Km for putting on commercial operation. The above rates are applicable for a completed length 69.22 Km, which comprising of following:

Type of section	Length (Km)	Equivalent Length (km) for which user fee is to be levied	configuration
Straight Section	43.029	43.029	4
Bypass (costing > Rs.10.0 Cr.)	25.773	25.773	4
Structures (length > 60m)	0.418	4.180	6

3 The following concessions are available at above toll plaza:
- i) Return Journey within 24 Hours from time of payment for all categories of vehicles (discount 25%)
- ii) 50 single journey in a month from date of payment for all categories of vehicles (discount-33%)
- iii) Pass at Rs. 350.00 per calendar month for non-commercial vehicle residing within 20 Km. from Toll Plaza.
- iv) The Annual Pass for the FY 2026-27 is Rs.3075/- for one year validity or 200 toll plaza crossings .
- v) Commercial Vehicle (excluding those plying under national permit) registered in the District of Toll Plaza (discount 50%)

4. The list of exempted vehicles is as given in the Amendment to Fee Rules dated 03.12.2010 vide GSR 950(E)
5. The vehicle, which is loaded in excess of permissible load, shall pay 10 times the applicable fee rate and remove the excess load to make use of highway.
6. The Capital Cost of the Project is Rs. 2534.56 Crore out of which Rs. 204.52 Crore is recovered. The user fee (toll) rates shall be reduced to 40% on recovery of capital cost
7. For viewing the fee notification dated 2008 & its Amendments published in the Gazette, letter of NHAI dated 26.03.2026 containing approval of rates, etc, the website http://nhaitis.org may be visited.
8. For any enquiry and or giving complaints/suggestions, please contact (Sh. Bhuvanesh Kumar DGM (Tech) & Project Director, NHAL, PIU, Vivekanand Nagar, 2nd Cross Vidyagiri, Near Excellent NEET Academy Dharwad Ph:0836-2461244).

Note: Strike out whichever is not applicable.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
NATIONAL HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY OF INDIA
(Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Government of India)
Project Implementation Unit, Dharwad

PUBLIC NOTICE ON USER FEE (TOLL) RATES AT HALLIGUDI TOLL PLAZA APPLICABLE FROM 01.04.2026 to 31.03.2027

The public are hereby informed that pursuant to approval of user fee rates vide letter dated 26.03.2026 of NHAI, the User fee rates for use of section from Km. 128.850 to Km. 272.571 (Hubli to Hospet section) of NH-63 are going to be as under w.ef. 00.00 hrs. of 01.04.2026 at Halligudi Toll Plaza (Chainage: 220.160 Km., Near Halligudi Village, Gadag District) in the State of Karnataka.

Amount in Rs.

Category of Vehicles	Fee for single Journey (in Rupees)	Fee for return journey within a day twenty four hours from the time of payment) (in Rupees)	Fee for monthly pass for 50 single journeys in a month (once month from the date of payment (in Rupees)	Fee for commercial vehicles registered within district of Plaza
Car/Jeep/Van or Light Motor Vehicle	110	165	3720	55
Light Commercial Vehicle/ Light Goods Vehicle or Mini Bus	180	270	6010	90
Truck or Bus (2 Axle)	380	565	12595	190
3 Axle Commercial Vehicle	410	620	13740	205
Heavy Construction Machinery (HCM) or Earth Moving Equipment or Multi Axle Vehicle (4 to 6 axles)	595	890	19750	295
Oversized Vehicle (7 or more Axles)	720	1080	24045	360

The rate for monthly pass applicable for local non-commercial vehicle residing within a distance of 20 km from the toll plaza shall be **Rs.350.00**

2. The above section was developed as per provisions of Contract Agreement dated 29.08.2016 on EPC mode and Authority Engineer vide letter dated 10.03.2022 certified the completed length of 134.620 Km for putting on commercial operation. The above rates are applicable for a completed length 65.40 Km, which comprising of following:

Type of section	Length (Km)	Equivalent Length (km) for which user fee is to be levied	configuration
Straight Section	50.602	50.602	4
Bypass (costing > Rs.10.0 Cr.)	14.672	14.672	4
Structures (length > 60m)	0.126	1.260	6

3 The following concessions are available at above toll plaza:
- i) Return Journey within 24 Hours from time of payment for all categories of vehicles (discount 25%)
- ii) 50 single journey in a month from date of payment for all categories of vehicles (discount-33%)
- iii) Pass at Rs. 350.00 per calendar month for non-commercial vehicle residing within 20 Km. from Toll Plaza.
- iv) The Annual Pass for the FY 2026-27 is Rs.3075/- for one year validity or 200 toll plaza crossings .
- v) Commercial Vehicle (excluding those plying under national permit) registered in the District of Toll Plaza (discount 50%)

4. The list of exempted vehicles is as given in the Amendment to Fee Rules dated 03.12.2010 vide GSR 950(E)
5. The vehicle, which is loaded in excess of permissible load, shall pay 10 times the applicable fee rate and remove the excess load to make use of highway.
6. The Capital Cost of the Project is Rs. 2534.56 Crore out of which Rs. 142.81 Crore is recovered. The user fee (toll) rates shall be reduced to 40% on recovery of capital cost
7. For viewing the fee notification dated 2008 & its Amendments published in the Gazette, letter of NHAI dated 26.03.2026 containing approval of rates, etc, the website http://nhaitis.org may be visited.
8. For any enquiry and or giving complaints/suggestions, please contact (Sh. Bhuvanesh Kumar DGM (Tech) & Project Director, NHAL, PIU, Vivekanand Nagar, 2nd Cross Vidyagiri, Near Excellent NEET Academy Dharwad Ph:0836-2461244).

Note: Strike out whichever is not applicable.

Iran reports strike at Bushehr nuclear plant, third in 10 days

No. Of Americans Injured In Iran War Exceeds 300; 13 Killed

▶Continued from page 1

The spokesperson claimed that more than 500 US Army personnel were in these hideouts. Yahya Saree, a Houthi military spokesman, said Saturday barrage of ballistic missiles was launched toward what he described as "sensitive Israeli military sites" in southern Israel. The attack came hours after Saree signalled in a vague statement Friday that the rebels would join the war.

The situation at Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant continues to deteriorate and attacks pose a direct threat to nuclear safety, the head of Russia's state nuclear corporation Rosatom said on Saturday after another strike near the facility. The International Atomic Energy Agency said on Friday that Iran had informed it of another strike in the vicinity of Bushehr, the third such incident in 10 days, with no damage to the operating reactor and no release of radiation reported.

The Russian foreign ministry on Saturday called for "unequivocal and firm condemnation" of the attack near Bushehr. The Israeli military said Friday it had struck a heavy water reactor and a uranium processing plant in central Iran, but did not mention Bushehr. The plant in southwestern Iran has the country's only operational nuclear power reactor and was first connected to the grid in 2011.

The Saudi airbase attacked Friday, about 96km from the apital of Riyadh, was targeted twice earlier in the week. The base is run by the Royal Saudi Air Force but is also used by US troops. The number of Americans wounded in the Iran war has grown beyond 300, while 13 soldiers have been killed.

Elsewhere in the region on Saturday, drones struck Kuwait International Airport, damaging its radar, and the key port of Salalah in Oman. The United Arab Emirates said its forces were intercepting drones and missiles from Iran. Saudi Arabia's defence ministry said its forces had intercepted drones and a missile, without saying where they had come from.

The Israeli military said Saturday that it had begun a new round of bombardment in the Iranian capital of Tehran. The Israeli military said Saturday it had struck an industrial complex in Tehran used for the research and development of naval weapons. Israel also reported more waves of incoming Iranian missiles, which killed at least one person in Tel Aviv. A direct strike on a village in central Israel wounded 11 people and left a massive crater. AGENCIES

FOCUS SHIFTS TO A NEW STRAIT: BAB AL-MANDAB

A missile attack on Israel by Houthi rebels in Yemen raises concern that Tehran's proxies may again try to block Red Sea shipping routes, as Iran's chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz keeps another key global trade passage virtually closed

Who Are Houthis

The Houthis **are a crucial part of Iran's so-called 'Axis of Resistance', which includes militant groups in Lebanon, Iraq and the Palestinian territories.** They control the Yemeni capital of Sanaa and much of the country's north, and since 2014 have fought a civil war against the internationally recognised govt

How Houthis could drive up oil prices further

Since the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, **Saudi has been sending millions of barrels of crude oil a day through Bab al-Mandab, at the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula.** The 32km-wide strait is one of the busiest for global oil trade. A fourth of global container trade also transits through the strait on its way to and from the Suez Canal. While the group didn't say it would target tankers or other vessels transiting the southern Red Sea and the Bab al-Mandab Strait, it has the capability to do so

When they choked Bab al-Mandab

Houthis attacked over 100 ships on Red Sea with missiles and drones, sinking two and killing four sailors, from Nov 2023 until Jan 2025. Trump later stopped US counterstrikes after the rebels agreed, in an Oman-mediated deal, to halt attacks

Trump says Middle East is 'saved'; may not help Nato

Aishvarya Kavi

West Palm Beach, Florida: On Friday evening, while onstage at a finance conference in Miami Beach for Saudi Arabia's sovereign investment fund, President Donald Trump boasted that the world was "closer than ever to the rise of the Middle East" because of US dominance in the war with Iran.

"We saved not just Israel, we saved the Middle East — and it was proven by all those rockets that fired down upon you," Trump said.

Influential leaders from the region were in the audience Friday, including Yasir al-Rumayyan, the leader of the Saudi wealth fund that arranges the annual event, at which Trump also spoke last year. Al-Rumayyan was seen sitting next to Donald Trump Jr, the president's son. The Trump family has faced criticism for its business ties to Saudi Arabia.

Trump has made contradictory public comments on the timeline for the war, and his objectives for ending the conflict. In his remarks Friday, the president said the United States had some 3,500 additional targets left in Iran and that they would be "done pretty quickly."

That is in comparison with the more than 10,000 that the United States has struck since the start of the war, Adm. Brad Cooper, the head of US Central Command, said earlier this week.

At the end of his remarks, Trump hinted toward an escalating rift with Nato, which he has maligned for years but has invoked in the war with Iran. "Unlike Nato," Trump said, "Saudi Arabia fought, Qatar fought, UAE fought, Bahrain fought and Kuwait fought."

On Friday, Trump also suggested that Europe's unwillingness to become involved in the conflict with Iran meant that Americans did not have to honour their commitment to come to Europe's aid as part of the treaty's mutual self-defense clause. "We would have always been there for them," Trump said of Nato, which includes the US, Canada and more than a dozen European nations. "But now, based on their actions, I guess we don't have to be. Do we?" NYT

Merz slams Trump approach to Iran war

Berlin: German Chancellor Friedrich Merz has sharply criticised US President Donald Trump for his course of action in the Iran conflict, the German Press Agency reported. "What Trump is doing right now is not de-escalation and an attempt to reach a peaceful solution, but a massive escalation with an uncertain outcome," Merz said late Friday at an event in Frankfurt. "These are escalations that are threatening," he added. "Not only for those directly affected, but for all of us." Merz also expressed doubt that the current leadership in Iran can be overthrown by the war. "Is regime change really the goal?" he said. "If that is the goal, I don't think they will achieve it. That has usually gone wrong." AP

Attacked Russia's Yaroslavl refinery, claims Ukraine

Russia's Yaroslavl oil refinery suffered damage after a Ukrainian drone attack overnight, according to the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. "A hit was recorded on the territory of the plant, followed by a fire," Ukraine's military said in its official Telegram channel.

The refinery in Yaroslavl, about 282km from Moscow, is co-owned by Rosneft and Gazprom Neft. It can process 15 million tonnes of crude year, equivalent to around 300,000 barrels per day. Russia didn't comment on the attack.

Russian strikes kill 4

Russian air attacks across Ukraine early Saturday killed at least four people and damaged critical infrastructure, including a port and a maternity hospital, authorities said, as Russia pressed on with its war against Ukraine. BLOOMBERG, AFP

A first since '22: Russian resolution passed in UNHRC

Geneva: Russia on Friday ushered a resolution through the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), a first since its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, in what observers said signals a growing push to re-enter the global stage. The text tabled by Russia seemed bland, merely calling on countries to properly celebrate the 60th anniversary of the adoption of international human rights covenants. It passed with 26 of the council's 47 members voting in favour and no votes opposing, but with 21 mainly Western countries abstaining. AFP

World's largest aircraft carrier leaves war front, in Croatia for maintenance

The USS Gerald R. Ford, the world's largest aircraft carrier that has been part of Middle East war operations, arrived at the Croatian city of Split on Saturday, the US embassy said in a statement.

AFP journalists saw the vessel arriving on Saturday morning as it headed toward the port, with the embassy saying it was part of a "scheduled port visit and maintenance". The carrier left a naval base in Crete earlier this week after returning to the base following a laundry fire onboard, which injured two crew members.

"During its visit the USS Gerald R Ford will host local officials and key leaders to recognise the strong and enduring alliance between the United States and Croatia," the embassy statement said.

The US and Israel launched a massive air campaign against Iran in late Feb following a major US military buildup in the Middle East that included the Ford and another aircraft carrier, the Abraham Lincoln. Both ships, with air wings made up of dozens of aircraft, have played key roles in Iran operations, and the withdrawal of the Ford leaves a gap for US forces in the region.

The Ford has been at sea for nine months — a deployment that has already seen it take part in operations in the Caribbean, where the US forces carried out strikes on alleged drug-smuggling boats, interdicted sanctioned tankers and seized Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro.

A fire broke out in a laundry room aboard the carrier on March 12, injuring two sailors and causing major damage to some 100 beds, according to the US military.

The carrier has also reportedly suffered significant problems with its toilet system while at sea, with the US media reporting clogs and long lines for restrooms on the ship. AFP

Reuters

Soldiers leave US aircraft carrier 'Gerald R. Ford' and enter a civilian catamaran in Split, in the Adriatic Sea, Saturday

Bank of America to pay $72.5m to settle Epstein suit

Washington: Bank of America has agreed to pay $72.5 million to settle a class action lawsuit alleging that the bank facilitated a sex trafficking ring orchestrated by Jeffrey Epstein, court documents showed Friday. The bank said separately that while it continued to deny supporting Epstein's crimes, "this resolution allows us to put this matter behind us". The settlement, if approved in court, would avoid a potentially lengthy trial process. AFP

Main smelter damaged: Top aluminium maker

Emirates Global Aluminium's biggest metal-producing plant sustained "significant damage" during an Iranian missile and drone attack on Saturday, another blow to the region's commodity industry from the Middle East war.

The United Arab Emirates company is the region's biggest aluminium producer and a major supplier to global markets. Producers of energy and metals in the Persian Gulf are already cut off from global markets by the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz, and attacks like this are likely to extend the time it takes for operations to the return to normal when the war is over. EGA said it is still assessing damage from the attack on its Al Taweelah site located at the Khalifa Port industrial zone in the emirate of Abu Dhabi. BLOOMBERG

'NO KINGS' PROTESTS ROCK US

Reuters

Demonstrators take part in a 'No Kings' protest in front of the Lincoln Memorial, against US President Donald Trump's administration policies, in Washington, DC, on Saturday. Massive protests against Trump kicked off across the US and beyond, and it is the third time in less than a year that Americans have taken to the streets as part of the grassroots movement. Now they have something new to fume over — the war against Iran that Trump launched alongside Israel

Zelensky visits Arab states to talk drone defence

Kyiv: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Saturday made unannounced visits to the United Arab Emirates and Qatar as Ukraine seeks to use its drone expertise to help Gulf Arab states blunt Iran's attacks during the war in the Middle East. Zelensky said Ukraine has already signed 10-year security agreements with Saudi Arabia and Qatar, and expects to shortly finalise a similar agreement with the UAE.

Ukraine has grown into one of the world's leading producers of cutting-edge, battle-tested drone interceptors that are cheap and effective. In return for its aid to Gulf countries, Ukraine is seeking more high-end air-defence missiles that they possess and that Kyiv needs to counter Russia's attacks.

On Saturday, Zelensky and Emirati media reported a meeting between the Ukrainian president and his Emirati counterpart, Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, to discuss regional security amid the Iran war. Later, Zelensky announced on X he had arrived in Qatar. AP

Curbs on Venezuela minerals sector lifted

The US treasury department said Friday that it had lifted more sanctions against Venezuela's gold and other mineral industries, as it pushes for greater access to the South American country's vast natural resources. Besides gold and the world's largest oil reserves, Venezuela also produces diamonds, bauxite and rare earths such as coltan, crucial for a range of high-tech products. AFP

'Violent assault' on CNN crew by Israeli forces condemned

An international media association on Saturday condemned what it described as a "violent assault" by Israeli soldiers who detained a CNN crew in the occupied West Bank this week. A CNN team was reporting on the aftermath of an assault by Israeli settlers and the establishment of an illegal outpost near the Palestinian village of Tayasir on Thursday when it was detained by Israeli soldiers, the Foreign Press Association said. "The soldiers aggressively targeted the crew and Palestinian civilians present, pointing their rifles at them." AFP

3 Lebanese journalists killed in Israeli strikes

An Israeli strike killed three journalists Saturday in south Lebanon, including a well-known reporter for Hezbollah's Al Manar network, with Lebanese authorities denouncing the attack as a "war crime".

The Israeli military confirmed killing Al Manar correspondent Ali Shoeib, accusing him of having "operated within the Hezbollah terrorist organisation under the guise of a journalist".

A Lebanese military source told AFP earlier on Saturday that Ali Shoeib of Hezbollah's Al Manar channel and Fatima Ftouni of Al Mayadeen, seen as close to the Iran-backed movement, were killed in Jezzine, alongside Ftouni's brother, a cameraman.

Al Mayadeen and Al Manar confirmed the deaths of their journalists. Shoeib was one of Al Manar's most prominent war correspondents, having covered Israeli attacks on Lebanon for decades.

Lebanese President Joseph Aoun condemned the killings, calling them "a blatant crime that violates all norms and treaties under which journalists enjoy international protection in wars". AFP

Report: Pak bids for mediation in Mideast conflict while fuelling regional instability

Islamabad: Pakistan, given its association with the A Q Khan network — a global nuclear smuggling chain that supplied enrichment technology to Iran, Libya, and North Korea — lacks credibility as the guardian amid its reported move to convey the American proposal to Iran and offer to host talks, a report stated.

"This is not mediation. It is control. Whoever defines the room defines the outcome. And this file defines security: Israel, the US, the Gulf, the West, and India. There is only one answer: not Pakistan. Pakistan can pass messages. It cannot hold an agreement. A mediator gives up interest. Pakistan cannot. A state with an interest is not a middle ground. It is a side," Shay Gal, an Israeli analyst, wrote in The Eurasian Times.

"The state that produced the A Q Khan network, which supplied enrichment technology to Iran, Libya, and North Korea, cannot act as the guardian of an arrangement meant to restrain Iran. The party that created the problem does not guarantee its solution," he added.

The expert noted that for years, Washington was unable to dismantle terror sanctuaries in northwestern Pakistan despite heavy reliance on the Pakistani military and massive investment. "In 2026, the assessment remains severe: terrorism, conflict zones, escalating attacks, and rising casualties. A state struggling for continuity, infrastructure security, and control over sensitive spaces does not build an agreement with Iran. It seeks respite. 'Pakistan' is not a transparent political term. The actor managing this file in practice is not an open civilian system operating under effective oversight, but first and foremost the military establishment," Gal stressed.

According to the report, if the development unfolds, Pakistan could gain an enhanced standing in Washington after years of suspicion. The report said the war has exposed Pakistan's vulnerability to energy shocks and spillovers from the crisis, even as it continues negotiations with the International Monetary Fund.

Expressing concerns over Pakistan's controversial record in fuelling regional instability, the report further said, "If Washington chooses Pakistan because it is available, not because it is right, it repeats the same pattern: placing crises in the hands of those who profit from them. Such an agreement does not remove the threat. It defers it. Israel rejects it in advance." IANS

DAILY PLANET

AFP

WORLD'S TALLEST CHURCH: A general view of world's tallest church, the Sagrada Familia basilica in Barcelona, Spain, on Saturday shows the now fully revealed 17-metre-high and 13.5-metre-wide cross that completes its main Tower of Jesus Christ. The cross crowns the basilica at 172.5 metres. Conceived by Antoni Gaudi over 140 years ago, the basilica is one of Spain's most visited landmarks

Ex-UK PM Sunak urges small firms to adopt AI

Goldman Sachs Group's bankers gathered at a library in Birmingham this week to guide small UK businesses on scaling up in artificial intelligence — and to warn them of the risks of ignoring the new technology. "We have a situation where global behemoths are swallowing up small businesses or pushing them out," said former UK PM Rishi Sunak, who was appointed as a senior adviser to the bank in July. "When it comes to AI, adoption is everything."

Singapore seizes record Asian pangolin scales

Singapore has seized over 830 kilograms of Asian pangolin scales hidden and disguised as 'dried fish skin' in a shipment bound for Cambodia, authorities said Saturday, calling it the largest haul of its kind discovered in the city-state.

Crew onboard missing Cuba-bound boat safe

Two sailboats carrying aid to Cuba that went missing have been found, convoy organisers said Saturday, but Mexico's navy leading the search was yet to comment as circumstances around the vessels' disappearance remained unclear. The Mexican Navy reported Thursday that it began a search and rescue mission after losing communication with the vessels.

22 migrants die off Greece

Twenty-two migrants hoping to reach Europe from North Africa have died off the coast of Greece after six days at sea in a rubber boat, survivors told the Greek coastguard Saturday. The coastguard said Friday that 21 Bangladeshis, four South Sudanese and a Chadian citizen had emerged from the ordeal alive.

US proposes sharp hike in H-1B, PERM wage thresholds

Lubna Kably

In a move that could reshape hiring of foreign skilled professionals, the US department of labor (DOL) has proposed a sweeping overhaul of wage rules for H-1B visas and employment-linked green card programmes, sharply raising minimum salary thresholds across skill levels.

The proposed rule, titled 'Improving Wage Protections for the Temporary and Permanent Employment of Certain Foreign Nationals in the United States,' released recently will be open for public comments for 60 days.

At the core is a revision of the prevailing wage system, which sets the minimum salary employers must offer foreign workers. Currently, wages are pegged to four levels at roughly the 17th, 34th, 50th and 67th percentiles of market wages. The DOL estimates raising these thresholds significantly would increase the average certified wage by about $14,000 per year per position.

Sponsors of H-1B workers must file a labour condition application certifying they will pay the prevailing wage. Similarly, PERM — the labour certification process for green cards also requires employers to offer the prevailing wage.

Canada's new C-12 law raises concerns for int'l students, workers

Lubna Kably

Canada's newly enacted Bill C-12, which received royal assent on March 26, aims primarily at tightening asylum rules and strengthening border controls. But immigration and education experts warn that its sweeping powers could have unintended consequences for immigrants ranging from students to permanent residents.

C-12 lets authorities cancel, suspend or modify large groups of visas or permits, pause or stop accepting applications, and even halt an ongoing processing by raising 'public interest' concerns like fraud, public health, safety or national security.

The Canadian Immigration Lawyers Association (CILA) has flagged serious reservations about the law's scope, including the fact that it applies retroactively. "The term 'public interest' remains undefined in the Act, opening the door to arbitrary actions by govt. Students and skilled workers could see their permits cancelled without explanation," stated CILA.

India is Canada's single largest source country across immigration categories. Thus, the sweeping ambit of C-12 is causing anxiety across the diaspora. According to official data, over 5 lakh Indian students were studying in Canada in 2024, accounting for roughly 40% of the total international student population, making them the largest cohort. While numbers are said to have fallen since then, Indian students remain a significant contingent.

Toronto-based immigration lawyer Zeynab Ziaie Moayyed, cautioned that the ripple effects could extend to international students. "Top students will reconsider investing in Canadian education if post-graduation pathways appear uncertain."

The concerns are echoed in Canada's higher education sector. A commentary in University Affairs, a Canadian higher education publication, warned that students could become 'collateral damage', as the law allows authorities to suspend or cancel entire categories of study permits, potentially affecting even those already enrolled.

Hrs after oath, Nepal govt arrests ex-PM over Gen Z protest deaths

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Less than 24 hours after Balendra "Balen" Shah, 35, took oath as Nepal's prime minister, his govt Saturday ordered the arrest of former PM KP Sharma Oli, 74, and former home minister Ramesh Lekhak over Sept 2025 crackdown on Gen Z protesters.

The govt in Kathmandu said it was acting on a key campaign promise and on the "leaked" Gauri Bahadur Karki commission report that recommended a criminal probe into their role in violence that followed the agitation last year in which 76 people died.

Police detained Oli from his residence in Bhaktapur, on the outskirts of Kathmandu, and picked up Lekhak separately. Scores of policemen were deployed outside Oli's residence after Shah's first Cabinet meeting decided to act on the panel's recommendations.

On the new administration's first major act in office, home minister Sudan Gurung said, "Promise is promise. No one is above law. Former PM Oli and former HM Lekhak are taken under control. It's just the beginning of justice."

The leaked Karki report went beyond broad criticism of the crackdown. It said Oli, as the "executive head", "should be held responsible for anything, good or bad" that happened under his administration, and concluded that "no effort was made to stop or control the firing". In one of its strongest findings, the commission said that because of "their negligent conduct", "even minors lost their lives".

The panel also criticised the wider state response as the protests spiralled. It held Lekhak responsible for failing to mobilise the security apparatus effectively and for not pursuing a political response as the unrest escalated. It also recommended action against former police chief Chandra Kuber Khapung and other senior officials.

Oli rejected the move and told his lawyers and party colleagues, "This arrest is retaliatory. I will fight it legally, prepare yourselves." Lekhak also opposed the action and said he would fight the case "politically and legally", while leaders of UML and Nepali Congress described the report as "incomplete and biased".

Supporters took to the streets, and some scuffled with police outside Oli's residence. Roads were blocked, tyres and copies of the commission report were burned, and demands for his release grew louder through the day. Oli was later taken for medical examination because of existing health conditions, while Lekhak remained in custody.

Among those who saw the arrests as a first step, not an end point, was Amrita Ban, 23, a Gen Z activist who had joined the protests and attended Shah's oath ceremony on Friday. "Seeing Oli and Lekhak being arrested gives me hope that justice is indeed finally beginning," Ban said. "This is what many of us in the movement had demanded. But it cannot stop here..."

Reuters

KP Sharma Oli being taken to a hospital after his detention by police, in Kathmandu, Saturday

"MUMBAI WANTED ME TO KEEP (DURING SYED MUSHTAQ ALI TROPHY). I SAID WHY NOT? IT'S A NEW CHALLENGE AND I HAVE ENJOYED IT A LOT. I'VE BEEN PRACTICING IT QUITE A BIT AND WE'LL SEE WHAT HAPPENS WITH IT."
—Angkrish Raghuvanshi | KKR BATTER

RCB SHOW WHO'S THE BOSS

KOHLI, PADIKKAL, DUFFY STAR AS DEFENDING CHAMPS BEGIN CAMPAIGN WITH STATEMENT WIN OVER SRH

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Bengaluru: The M Chinnaswamy Stadium was bathed in red on Saturday night. Not just in colour but in the commanding form of defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru as they opened their IPL campaign with a six-wicket win over Sunrisers Hyderabad.

After pacer Jacob Duffy (3/22) set up the game with a dream debut, it was Devdutt Padikkal and Virat Kohli who lit up the chase. Padikkal's fluent 61 off 26 balls (7x4, 4x6) and Kohli's unbeaten 69 off 38 (5x4, 5x6) ensured RCB made light work of the 202-run target, getting home with 26 balls to spare.

Playing in his backyard, Padikkal looked in complete control. Fresh off an impressive domestic season that saw him play a key role in Karnataka's run to the Ranji Trophy final, the left-hander carried that form into the night.

Walking in after Phil Salt's (8) early departure, Padikkal wasted little time settling in. A trademark flick for six off Jaydev Unadkat set the tone. Particularly impressive was his intent against left-arm pacer David Payne, including a one-knee six.

Often criticised for getting stuck on the crease, Padikkal showed improved footwork and raced to his half-century with a crisp straight drive, as Kohli cheered from the other end. Padikkal, going for a big one against Harsh Dubey, failed to get past the mid-off region with Klaasen taking a regulation catch.

Kohli, who was on 30 when the partnership ended, shifted gears. He anchored the innings through a brief wobble that saw skipper Rajat Patidar (31) and Jitesh Sharma (0) fall off successive deliveries to Payne. With the finish line in sight, Kohli and Tim David (16 n.o) wrapped it up without fuss.

The early narrative belonged to the debutants —one making his IPL bow, the other leading a side for the first time in the competition. RCB pacer Duffy marked his debut in style, ripping through SRH's top order. But Ishan, captaining SRH for the first time, stood firm against the early burst, producing a counter-attacking 38-ball 80 (8x4, 5x6) to pull his side out of trouble.

SRH recovered from early jolts and owed their total to Ishan's composure and Aniket Verma's (43; 18b; 3x4; 4x6) late flourish.

Duffy made an immediate impact. Spearheading the bowling attack in the absence of Australian quick Josh Hazlewood, the New Zealand pacer struck in his second over to break the back of SRH's explosive top order.

Abhishek Sharma miscued a pull to wicketkeeper Jitesh Sharma. Five balls later, Travis Head fell to a short ball, pulling straight to Phil Salt at deep backward square leg. Nitish Reddy followed soon after, top-edging another short delivery to Abhinandan Kumar at midwicket.

While wickets fell around him, Ishan held his nerve. The left-hander found his rhythm against medium pacer Abhinandan Kumar in the sixth over, smashing 6, 4, 6 to signal a shift in momentum. Fresh from a strong T20 World Cup campaign, Ishan carried that form seamlessly. Ishan found an able ally in Heinrich Klaasen (31), and the duo stitched together a crucial 97-run stand for the fourth wicket.

Just as Ishan looked set for a century, his 74-minute stay ended in dramatic fashion, with Salt pulling off a stunning one-handed catch at the boundary off to become Abhinandan's maiden IPL wicket.

61 Devdutt Padikkal's highest score vs SRH. It was left-hander's second fifty against them. Overall, he has scored 12 IPL fifties with nine coming for RCB and three for Rajasthan Royals.

29 Ishan Kishan became the 29th batter to cross the 3,000-run mark in the IPL. With his 18th fifty, he has now scored 3,078 runs in 113 innings.

4027 Runs scored by Virat Kohli at an average of 41.51 in 125 innings to become the first batter to amass 4000-plus runs while chasing totals in IPL.

26 RCB chased the total with 26 balls to spare to eclipse RR's record of chasing a score of 200-plus in the IPL. RR had achieved it with 25 balls in hand against GT at Jaipur on April 28, 2025.

Stats: Rajesh Kumar

Pics: Syed Asif

OFF THE BLOCKS: Devdutt Padikkal (L) and Virat Kohli shared a second-wicket stand of 101 from just 45 balls

FANTASTIC DEBUT: Jacob Duffy (R) accounted for Travis Head and Abhishek Sharma

SCOREBOARD

SRH: Travis Head c Salt b Duffy 11, Abhishek Sharma c Jitesh b Duffy 7, Ishan Kishan c Salt b Abhinandan 80, Nitish Kumar Reddy c Abhinandan b Duffy 1, Heinrich Klaasen c Salt b Shepherd 31, Salil Arora c Padikkal b Suyash 9, Aniket Verma c Kohli b Shepherd 43, Harsh Dubey c Padikkal b Shepherd 3, Harshal Patel c Padikkal b Kumar 0, David Payne not out 6, Jaydev Unadkat not out 4; **Extras:** (LB2, W4) 6; **Total:** (for nine wickets in 20 overs) **201**; **FoW:** 1-18, 2-23, 3-29, 4-126, 5-137, 6-155, 7-167, 8-174, 9-192; **Bowling:** Jacob Duffy 4-0-22-3, Bhuvneshwar Kumar 4-0-31-1, Abhinandan Singh 3-0-38-1, Romario Shepherd 4-0-54-3, Suyash Sharma 3-0-28-1, Krunal Pandya 2-0-26-0

RCB: Phil Salt c Klaasen b Unadkat 8, Virat Kohli not out 69, Devdutt Padikkal c Klaasen b Dubey 61, Rajat Patidar c Dubey b Payne 31, Jitesh Sharma c Unadkat b Payne 0, Tim David 16; **Extras:** (B8, LB3, W7) **18**; **Total:** (For four wickets, in 15.4 overs) **203**; **FoW:** 1-9, 2-110, 3-163, 4-163; **Bowling:** Nitish Kumar Reddy 2-0-19-0, Jaydev Unadkat 3-0-29-1, David Payne 3-0-35-2, Harsh Dubey 3-0-35-1, Eshan Malinga 2-0-35-0, Harshal Patel 2.4-0-39-0

Result: RCB won by six wickets

Can CSK learn to live without Dhoni?

Legend Out For 3 Weeks With Calf Strain, May Miss Up To Six Games

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Chennai: Mahendra Singh Dhoni is in the final lap of his career. For all practical purposes, this is going to be his last IPL. And now, it seems that his 44-year-old body is disobeying his will to carry on even for that final burst.

Dhoni, who has been training hard for over a month, has suffered a calf strain in practice that could keep him out for around three weeks. While the official CSK release mentions a two-week layoff, team sources indicate it is unlikely he will return before the last week of April.

That could mean the legend misses at least six matches, with a possible return against Mumbai Indians on April 23 also uncertain.

Staying back

"It is definitely a big blow for us and we'll have to deal with it," a senior CSK official said. Dhoni hasn't travelled to Guwahati for the team's first match against Rajasthan Royals on Sunday and is doing his rehabilitation in Chennai. "He is taking rest and we want him back as soon as possible," the source said.

While Dhoni's absence reduces the buzz around CSK, it could also prove to be a blessing in disguise. The five-time IPL winning captain wasn't close to his best in the last couple of seasons and his role was limited to brief spells of batting post the 15th over due to the constant injuries that he had suffered.

It was high time that Super Kings found a capable lower-order batter and in Dhoni's absence, the door may open for the likes of Prashant Veer and Karthik Sharma — brought in for Rs 14.2 crores —to take responsibility at the back-end of the innings with some explosive batting.

BLESSING IN DISGUISE? MS Dhoni's absence will reduce the buzz around CSK

Samson to keep

The keeping aspect, though, is well covered with Sanju Samson coming in. Long before the IPL, the CSK CEO Kashi Viswanathan had said that Dhoni was unlikely to play all games, indicating that Sanju would be the No. 1 keeper. It also meant that Dhoni would be an 'Impact Sub' as a batter and now, following the injury, it may well be forced upon CSK as well, even when he is back.

The fact that Dhoni hasn't travelled with the team and won't be in the dug-out clearly indicates that during the match, the team will be looking at the new leadership group of Ruturaj Gaikwad and Samson to take critical calls, maybe in consultation with coach Stephen Fleming.

While CSK die-hards will hope to catch a glimpse of Dhoni in action later in the IPL at the MA Chidambaram Stadium, the next three weeks will give us an indication of the direction that the five-time champions will go in the future.

SNAP SHOTS

INJURED STOKES RETURN GETS DELAYED

England Test captain Ben Stokes will be sidelined for the first month of the county season as he recovers from facial injuries sustained in a training accident. Stokes suffered a broken cheekbone after being hit by the ball during a net session with his Durham teammates last month. The 34-year-old said that his subsequent surgery was a success, although his photo on Instagram, showing a badly swollen and bruised face, revealed the extent of the horror injury. The prolonged rehabilitation process means that Stokes has had to delay his return to action.

Ashwin signs up for Unicorns: Former India spinner Ravichandran Ashwin is all set to make his Major League Cricket debut in June after signing for San Francisco Unicorns. Ashwin will become the first India-capped player to compete in the league. Ashwin was supposed to play in last edition of Big Bash League (BBL) for Sydney Thunders but had to pull out due to an injury.

Raphinha to miss Champions League quarters: Barcelona attacker Raphinha will miss their Champions League quarterfinal tie with Atletico Madrid early next month after suffering a hamstring injury on international duty with Brazil, the LaLiga side said. The 29-year-old picked up the injury on Thursday in Brazil's 2-1 defeat by France in Foxborough.

Footballers pay tribute to victims: The Iran men's national team wore black armbands and posed with school rucksacks as the national anthem played before a friendly match with Nigeria in Belek, Turkey to remember the victims of a strike on a primary school in Iran on the first day of the Middle East war. Before kick-off on Friday, the Iran players, including former FC Porto and Inter Milan striker Mehdi Taremi, held pink and purple school bags with ribbons on them. Iran lost the match 2-1.

Theegala lies tied 11th: Sahith Theegala carded a second successive round of 3-under 67 to retain his tied-11th position with a two-day total of 6-under at the Texas Children's Houston Open in USA. Sudarshan Yellamaraju (69-66), was tied for 20th, while former US Open champion Gary Woodland (64-63) surged into the lead.
Missed cut: Aditi Ashok (Chandler, Arizona, USA).

Siddhanth bags two bronze medals: Siddhanth M claimed two bronze medals in the Sub-junior and Cadet National table tennis championships in Gandhidham, Gujarat. The Karnataka paddler lost 11-7, 13-15, 11-8, 11-13, 6-11 to Ariv Dutta of Bengal in the U-13 Youth boys singles semifinal. In doubles, Punjab's Vohra Trijal and Sharma Satwik beat Siddanth and M Satwik 11-6, 7-11, 11-7, 10-12, 11-5 in the semifinal.
Results: U-13 Youth Boys (semis): Singles: Ariv Dutta (Ben) bt M Siddhanth (Kar) 7-11, 15-13, 8-11, 13-11, 11-6; **Doubles:** Vohra Trijal & Sharma Satwik (Pun) bt M Siddanth & M Satwik (Kar) 11-6, 7-11, 11-7, 10-12, 11-5.

Jaandaar fancied: Jaandaar should win the Jimmy Bharucha Salver at the Mumbai races on Sunday. **Selections: 1st race:** Arbitrage 1, Between Friends 2, Samson 3. 3rd race: Jaandar 1, Storm Majesty 2, Blue Jet 3. 5th race: Brayion 1, Aazadi 2, Pinnacle 3.

Order outside, emotions inside at RCB homecoming

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Bengaluru: Ten months after the last Indian Premier League (IPL) match was played at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium here, cricket returned to Royal Challengers Bengaluru's (RCB) home turf on Saturday with renewed vigour — and a reworked match-day experience for fans.

Yet, amid the buzz, memories of last year's tragedy lingered. The 11 seats dedicated to

IPL 2026

those who lost their lives during RCB's victory celebrations stood out — encased within a picket fence and adorned with floral motifs against a white backdrop. A quiet reminder in a charged atmosphere.

Outside the stadium, activity picked up early. Once the gates opened around 3.30 pm, spectators began streaming in, many arriving well in advance to navigate the revamped entry system, avoiding last-minute hassles. The excitement wasn't limited to local fans only. Curtis P, an Infosys employee from Florida, was among a group of five colleagues from across the US who had planned their visit around the match. "I'm a huge cricket fan and have been coming to India to watch games for a while. We had a work trip planned and timed it to coincide with this match," Curtis said. For several regulars, the changes translated into a smoother experience.

IN HONOUR: Fans paying tribute, (right) queue at the entry gate

Pics: Syed Asif

Vishwanath Reddy, a retired Army officer and long-time attendee, was impressed. "In over three decades, this was possibly the smoothest entry experience. Police ensured only valid ticket holders were allowed near the gates and kept people moving instead of letting the crowds build up. I hope this becomes the norm," he said.

However, not everyone had a seamless start. For some, unfamiliarity with updated security protocols led to inconvenience. Vinaya V, who had come with her daughter Mairah, found the restrictions frustrating. "We weren't aware that digital watches weren't allowed. We had to walk quite a distance to deposit it at the baggage counter and then return," she said.

RCB fan Santosh Udupa had a similar experience. "I was caught off guard when they said I couldn't carry my keys. After some discussion, they allowed my house keys, but I had to deposit my car keys because of the sensors," he said. Many others, who had overlooked the fine print on prohibited items, were seen in discussions with security personnel after being stopped from carrying belongings such as bags, perfumes and cosmetics inside. Despite these minor hiccups, the overall arrangements marked a significant improvement. More than 2,000 personnel — including city police, CCB, traffic and civil defence staff — were deployed to manage the crowds. Mock drills conducted over the past 10 days appeared to have paid off, with entry points functioning largely without glitches and security personnel ensuring there was no loitering around the stadium premises. With access largely streamlined through Cubbon Road, Queen's Road was free of its usual match-day congestion.

Before the start of play, the packed stadium paused to honour the victims, with both the teams and fans observing a minute's silence, even as the message "Forever in our hearts" was displayed across the big screens. A moment of collective remembrance before cricket took centre stage.

MI look to break opening jinx

KKR Bank On Five-Time Champions' Familiar Flaw Despite Bumrah Boost

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Mumbai: Ahead of their IPL-2026 opener against Kolkata Knight Riders at the Wankhede Stadium on Sunday night, Mumbai Indians had reason for both cheer and slight concern. At the pre-match press conference, MI head coach Mahela Jayawardene confirmed that world cricket's premier pacer Jasprit Bumrah had rejoined the squad after returning from the BCCI Centre of Excellence.

"Jassi is back with the squad, he is available to play," Jayawardene said on Saturday. However, he revealed that New Zealand left-arm spinner and T20 captain Mitchell Santner and English all-rounder Will Jacks had sought an "extended break" for personal

PREVIEW

reasons — a request the franchise had "happily" approved.

"With the guys who are joining, Mitch and Jacksey asked for a slightly extended time for personal reasons, and we were quite happy to go with that. But they'll join the team pretty soon," he said, while declining to specify an exact timeline, calling it a private arrangement.

Bumrah, Santner and Jacks were notable absentees from MI's mandatory training session two days before the opener. Santner had been on national duty, while Jacks was part of England's semifinal loss at the Wankhede. It is still unclear whether either has rejoined the squad in India. Both remain key overseas options. Jacks, who won four Player-of-the-Match awards during the recent T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka, offers valuable off-spin and power-hitting, while Santner provides control through the middle overs and handy contributions with the bat.

Bumrah, meanwhile, spent five days at the CoE as part of routine workload monitoring rather than injury concerns. His T20 World Cup campaign — 14 wickets in eight matches at 12.42, including a decisive spell in the final — underlined his importance. MI will hope their pace spearhead hits his stride early this season.

PTI

ALL SET: KKR captain Ajinkya Rahane (right) during a training session

KKR WILL HAVE TO BE AT THEIR BEST, SAYS WATSON

KKR assistant coach Shane Watson acknowledged MI's well-known tendency to start slowly and hoped that trend continues.

"Well, let's hope that that shocking record MI have in the first game continues," Watson said. "Wankhede is a fortress. Mumbai Indians are very hard to beat here — I've experienced that as a player and coach. We'll have to be at our very best."

WEATHER
29°C

NUMBERS GAME

109 Rohit Sharma's unbeaten knock off 60 balls at Eden Gardens on May 12, 2012 remains the highest individual score in the IPL matches involving the two teams. Venkatesh Iyer's 104 off 51 balls at Wankhede Stadium on April 16, 2023 is the highest for KKR against MI.

5/10 Jasprit Bumrah's career-best bowling performance in T20 came for MI vs KKR during an IPL fixture at DY Patil Stadium, Navi Mumbai, on May 9, 2022. His figures are the second best in a losing cause in the history of the IPL behind Adam Zampa's 6/12 for RPS vs Sunrisers Hyderabad at Visakhapatnam on May 10, 2016.

5/15 Andre Russell's only five-wicket haul of his T20 career came for KKR in a losing cause against MI in Chennai on April 13, 2021.

Stats: Rajesh Kumar

Spaniard Chacarra chases a rare double

Moushumi.Bora
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Getty Images

Gurugram: Don't let the spring bloom, gentle streams, or the call of the peacock fool you. This beauty is a beast.

Sometimes a bogey is par for the course at the DLF Golf and Country Club. And the weekend's no party at the Hero Indian Open with the pin positions strategically, almost sadistically, placed on the slopes. The thicker rough, imposing bunkers, slow fringes and a bright sun that dried up the greens added to the misery on Saturday.

"It was a grind," admitted **Eugenio Chacarra**, who increased his lead at the $2.55

GOLF

million event from one to four strokes at 10-under. It was particularly because his challengers failed to advance on 'moving day' while he soldiered on with a two-under 70.

It's how you handle your adversities that count on this course. Perhaps the biggest smiles on the Spaniard's face came when he conceded 'only' a bogey on the 6th, and made a par save on the 15th after back-to-back dropped shots. "It's just one stroke better, at the end of the round it's a lot of difference," summed up the defending champion, who won last year on a 3-under score.

Many promise never to return to what some golfers call "the hardest on the Tour". Others relish the challenge, including Chacarra. At the 18th, the leading group formed a triangle, three different views from their putt positions, each touch a struggle. "I hit a great shot on the last right at the pin and I had almost an impossible two-putt," pointed out Chacarra. The last two days yielded a birdie and an eagle on the closing hole, now a par for a Saturday job well done.

In-form South African Casey Jarvis, who found his mojo with a 64 a day before, was stumped by his bogey. He retreated with a three-over 75, in tied-sixth. MJ Daffue, in tied-second place with Alex Fitzpatrick, was happy to settle for a par there. "You can't leave yourself above a slope. The greens are just too fast," sighed the South African.

For MJ, the course is a "monster" but he will lean on the memory of winning the second-tier event at Classic last week. "At the end of the day, I should be able to apply that to any situation. I'll aim for 5-under tomorrow." It's a target that may prove ambitious given the conditions.

Sinner vs Lehecka in final

AFP

TOP SHOW: Jiri Lehecka

World number two Jannik Sinner of Italy stretched his win streak over fourth-ranked Alexander Zverev to seven matches on Friday, advancing to an Miami Open men's final against Czech Jiri Lehecka.

The 24-year-old Italian boosted his streak of consecutive sets won at the elite Masters 1000 level to 32 in

TENNIS

beating Germany's Zverev 6-3, 7-6 (7/4) after an hour and 53 minutes. Reigning Wimbledon champion Sinner, a four-time Grand Slam winner, also beat Zverev two weeks ago in the Indian Wells semifinals and seeks his second Miami crown in three years.

Sinner is trying to become the first man since Roger Federer in 2017 to complete the "Sunshine Double" by winning titles at Indian Wells and Miami in the same year.

Lehecka, seeded 21st, dominated 28th-seeded Arthur Fils of France 6-2, 6-2 in the other semifinal at Hard Rock Stadium, home of the NFL's Miami Dolphins. Lehecka is winless in three matches against Sinner without taking a set. AFP

Siblings strive for better tidings

Pragg & Vaishali Braced For Cerebral Warfare In Cyprus

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Vaishali (L), R Praggnanandhaa

R Praggnanandhaa's idea was right but the execution was dubious.

He played with urgency and aggression on his debut Candidates chess tourna-

CANDIDATES

ment two years ago, and though he got penalised for his overambition in the second round against fellow Indian and eventual champion D Gukesh, he did not play passively in the remaining rounds of the tournament. An even-score in the last Candidates — beating Nijat Abasov twice and Vidit Gujrathi once — was not too bad a show.

Losing to Gukesh, Nakamura and Caruana must have been tough in Toronto.

But Pragg, who held world record of being the youngest ever International Master (IM) at 10 years, 10 months and 19 days in 2016, learnt his lesson. Pragg made the most of elite tournament invitations in classical chess last year. If winning at Wijk aan Zee was not enough, he made an Elo jump from 2741 to 2785 in seven months, spanning 55 games.

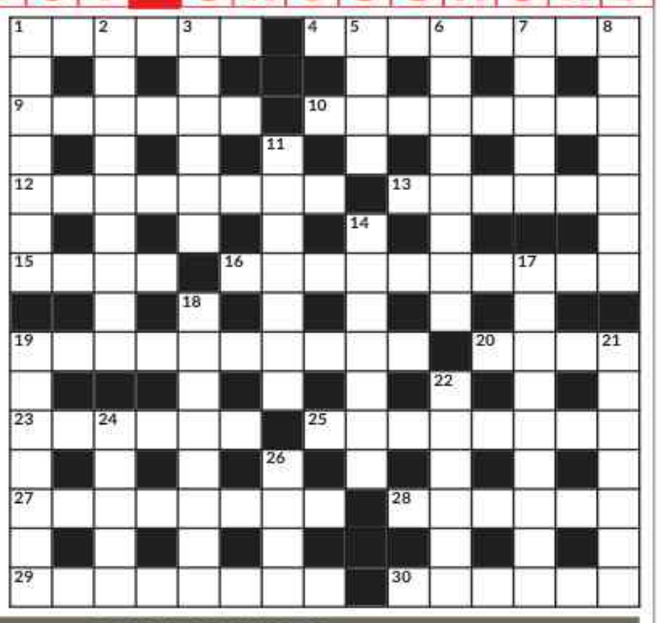
Pragg took up chess because of his elder sister Vaishali and soon escaped the gravitational force of sibling rivalry.

Vaishali (Elo 2470) is women's world No. 18 now and Pragg is 12 . But at 2741, the boy is way stronger. Vaishali, whose peak rating was 2506, is largely playing women-only tournaments now. Despite the sketchy form, Vaishali's second successive FIDE Grand Swiss title indicates her resilience. Aided by proximity with Pragg, Ramesh and mentor V Anand, she is expected to have better ammunition than most of her rivals at the Candidates.

THE TOI CROSSWORD

CROSSWORD No. TCC#0265

The **TOI Crossword contest** is on a short break, but the crossword itself will continue to be featured in The Sunday Times of India, so that you can continue to relish the challenge every week. **Stay tuned!**



The Times of India CROSSWORD EVERY SUNDAY

CRYPTIC CLUES

Across
1 It often clashes with its own kind (6)
4 Quietly object to a small portion (8)
9 Jabbing a petty officer with a ruler (6)
10 Withdrawing again losing interest (8)
12 Franciscan primate (8)
13 One might expect it to stick to seaside rock (6)
15 Board of trade (4)
16 Path of the swallow? (10)
19 Keep arguing - like Mrs Sprat does (4,3,3)
20 Show displeasure when nothing is in place (4)
23 Believe one will agree to an invitation? (6)
25 Contemplate a change in meat diet (8)
27 An agent bound to be reinstated (8)
28 Prudence West is taking Benedictine (6)
29 Negative poles seen to change? Absurd! (8)
30 Sung or spoken at church (6)

Down
1 Garment paid for on receipt in Massachusetts (4,3)
2 Patch up one's differences with Thackeray (9)
3 It will treat bruises in a car smash (6)
5 A parson upset enough to swear (4)
6 When darkening skies are tinged with gilt anew? (8)
7 Fresh scrip issue (5)
8 Converting heights into parts (7)
11 I write in red - not green (7)
14 Gave a fellow the wrong date (7)
17 Kind of duck that makes do with oranges (9)
18 Cessation of work means reduction in pay (8)
19 Arching in embarrassment (7)
21 Glider pilots find it uplifting (7)
22 Angle brackets in the end (6)
24 Bird one shouldn't have indoors? (5)
26 Grounds or pastures say (4)

QUICK CLUES

Across
1 US Pacific state (6) 4 Fleet of small ships (8)
9 A craving (6) 10 Wide view (8) 12 Abroad (8)
13 On fire (6) 15 To lean (4) 16 Outstripped (4,6)
19 Precedence on the road (5,2,3) 20 Pack away tidily (4)
23 Gloomy (6) 25 So to speak (2,2,4) 27 Experienced veteran (3,5) 28 Attack strongly (3,3) 29 Entrust to a deputy (8) 30 Interrupt and harass speaker (6)

Down
1 In eager haste (7) 2 Symbol of surrender (5,4)
3 Take no refusal (6) 5 A heavy soft metal (4)
6 Anxious (8) 7 South American transport animal (5)
8 Completed (2,2,3) 11 Commission from shady deal (4-3) 14 'The waltz king' (7) 17 On trial (2,3,4)
18 Of solid worth (8) 19 To answer (7) 21 Grapple (7)
22 Conflict (6) 24 Exemplary person (5) 26 Notable achievement (4)

SOLUTIONS TO LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

CRYPTIC

M	E	L	T	I	N	G	■	D	O	R	M	A	N	T
E	■	A	■	T	■	U	■	U	■	I	■	L	■	E
D	E	C	L	I	N	E	■	N	O	V	E	L	L	A
I	■	O	■	N	■	S	■	G	■	E	■	Y	■	R
C	A	N	O	E	■	S	T	A	R	T	L	I	N	G
A	■	I	■	R	■	■	■	R	■	■	■	N	■	A
L	U	C	R	A	T	I	V	E	■	C	A	G	E	S
■	■	■	■	R	■	N	■	E	■	O	■	■	■	■
C	O	C	K	Y	■	T	E	S	T	P	I	L	O	T
U	■	O	■	■	■	E	■	■	■	Y	■	E	■	A
S	C	A	R	E	C	R	O	W	■	R	E	G	A	L
T	■	S	■	R	■	C	■	I	■	I	■	A	■	O
O	U	T	R	A	G	E	■	T	I	G	H	T	E	N
D	■	A	■	T	■	P	■	C	■	H	■	E	■	E
Y	E	L	L	O	U	T	■	H	O	T	H	E	A	D

QUICK

P	A	I	D	O	F	F	■	I	N	S	U	L	A	R
E	■	N	■	U	■	R	■	N	■	O	■	O	■	E
G	A	V	O	T	T	E	■	R	O	U	N	D	U	P
A	■	O	■	O	■	A	■	E	■	S	■	G	■	L
S	T	I	F	F	■	K	A	T	H	A	R	I	N	A
U	■	C	■	T	■	■	■	R	■	■	■	N	■	C
S	P	E	C	U	L	A	T	E	■	V	A	G	U	E
■	■	■	■	N	■	T	■	A	■	I	■	■	■	■
D	E	F	O	E	■	P	U	T	A	C	R	O	S	S
E	■	U	■	■	■	R	■	■	■	E	■	B	■	O
F	O	R	E	F	F	E	C	T	■	V	I	T	A	L
L	■	T	■	E	■	S	■	E	■	E	■	R	■	V
E	N	H	A	N	C	E	■	P	E	R	F	U	M	E
C	■	E	■	C	■	N	■	I	■	S	■	D	■	N
T	O	R	R	E	N	T	■	D	I	A	L	E	C	T

Antonelli grabs pole

Suzuka (Japan): Italian teenager Kimi Antonelli looked every bit the seasoned veteran as he eased to a second successive pole position in Saturday's qualifying for the Japanese Grand Prix. The 19-year-old Mercedes driver, two weeks on from having scored his first pole and win, lit up the timing loops around the iconic

FORMULA ONE

5.8 kilometer-long Suzuka racetrack with a one minute 28.778-second lap.

Set on his first attempt, it was enough to beat teammate George Russell by a handy 0.298 seconds, with the Briton making it three out of three front-row lockouts for the team. Australian Oscar Piastri, 0.354 seconds off the pace, took third for McLaren. REUTERS

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Manikanta aims for more

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Raipur: Swimmers from Karnataka completely dominated the pool events at the Khelo India Tribal Games here, winning more than 20 medals. Leading the charge was **Manikanta L**, who clinched eight gold and one silver. The 21-year-old from Davanagere competed in the Asian Championships last year and wants to do even better in future. It couldn't have been possible, though, without the backing of his father Lakshmana.

"I took up swimming after seeing my uncle, who was a national-level swimmer. My father did ev-

TRIBAL GAMES

erything possible to ensure I followed my dreams, including buying a pool," Manikanta said after his successful showing at the International Swimming Pool here. "It was a proper 50m pool and I was about 17 years old when he bought the tender from the government and used to maintain it all by himself. But once I shifted to Bengaluru, he gave it up."

Olympian Sajan Prakash too has been a huge inspiration. "I got to train with him on several occasions, including at the Asian Championships camp last year and he has always been helpful. He always

guides me regarding the nuances of training," said Manikanta.

Besides the Asian Championships, the MBA student also participated in the World University Games in Germany last year and won a silver at the BIMSTEC Aquatics Championship in New Delhi two years ago. Now, his main target is to make the Asian Games and the Asian age group championships. But for that he will have to do well at the Nationals in June.

While Manikanta remains focused on making it big, some of the other swimmers from the state sadly don't see a career in swimming. One among them is Nidhi S, who won two silver and one bronze. "When the 'Lockdown' came, we realised that sport alone wouldn't be enough and that education also needed equal focus. That's when I started concentrating more on my studies," said the 21-year-old, who is pursuing an MSc in nutrition and dietetics.

Mandya down Bagalkote

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Mandya District cruised to a 51-7 win over Bagalkote District in a league match in the boys' section in the State Junior Basketball Championship here on Saturday. In the girls' section, Bangalore Vanguards BC outplayed MCHS BC 73-24.

Results: Boys: DK Dist 95 (Divith 29, Deekshith 17) bt Kalaburgi 43 (Abhishek 17, Shashikant 7) HT 48-19; Dharwad Dist 'A' 63 (Tejas 23, Steeve 16) bt Chamrajnagar 39 (Kevin 9, Alex 8) HT 30-24; Mysuru Dist 'B' 56 (Renish 19, Rohith 13) bt Ramanagar 31 (Sacheth 15, Niranjan 8) HT 34-23; Mandya 51 (Chinmay 10, Parinith 10) bt Bagalkote7 (Nanois 5) HT 29-4;

STATE JUNIOR BASKETBALL

Dharwad Dist 'A' 51 (Ramesh 18, Shashank 7) bt Davavangere 32 (Pragun 16, Karthik 6) HT 29-16; Mandya 70 (Yashwanth 14, Rajendra 12) bt Kolar 45 (Vishal 13, Rohan 9) HT 27-24.
Girls: Vijayapura 78 (Shreya 28, Sakshi 24) bt Dharwad Dist 'A' 35 (Aishwarya 8, Amruta 7) HT 43-23; Mounts BC 52 (Nidhi Umesh 13, Ananya 12) bt Hebbal BC 14 (Akshita 13) HT 19-6; Mysuru Dist 'A' 54 (Shravani 9, Shreya 8) bt Orions BC 12 (Akanksha 10) HT 30-7; Mandya 55 (Sadhana 17, Manasa 9) bt MNK Rao BC 11 (Aishwarya 4) HT 40-6; B'lore Vanguards BC 73 (Aditi S 28, Mahek Sharma 23) bt MCHS BC 24 (Livdeep 9) HT 41-14; Beagles BC 49 (Aadya 12, Purvi 7) bt AV BC 18 (Varunnavi 6) HT 33-6; Nettakallappa BC 25 (Adhwitee 14) bt Hoop-7 BC 22 (Dhanya 12) HT 19-6.

Woods charged with DUI after crash

Tiger Woods' turbulent career veered into fresh turmoil when the golf icon was arrested and charged with driving under the influence after a rollover crash near his Florida home, authorities said. Woods, 50, escaped injury but was detained after his vehicle clipped a truck while attempting to overtake on a residential road on Jupiter Island, flipping onto its side before sliding to a stop on Friday. AFP

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1.Euromonitor International Limited, based on custom research on ceiling fan brands unit sales in 2024 in the world, claim applicable across sales in retail channels only, research as of October 2025" 2&3. Available in selected models | 4. As of FY 2023 -2024 based on the external agencies' validation for the categories of fans & residential pumps.